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MY BROTHER JACK  
OR,  
THE STORY  
OF  
WHAT-D'YE-CALL'EM  
WRITTEN BY HIMSELF





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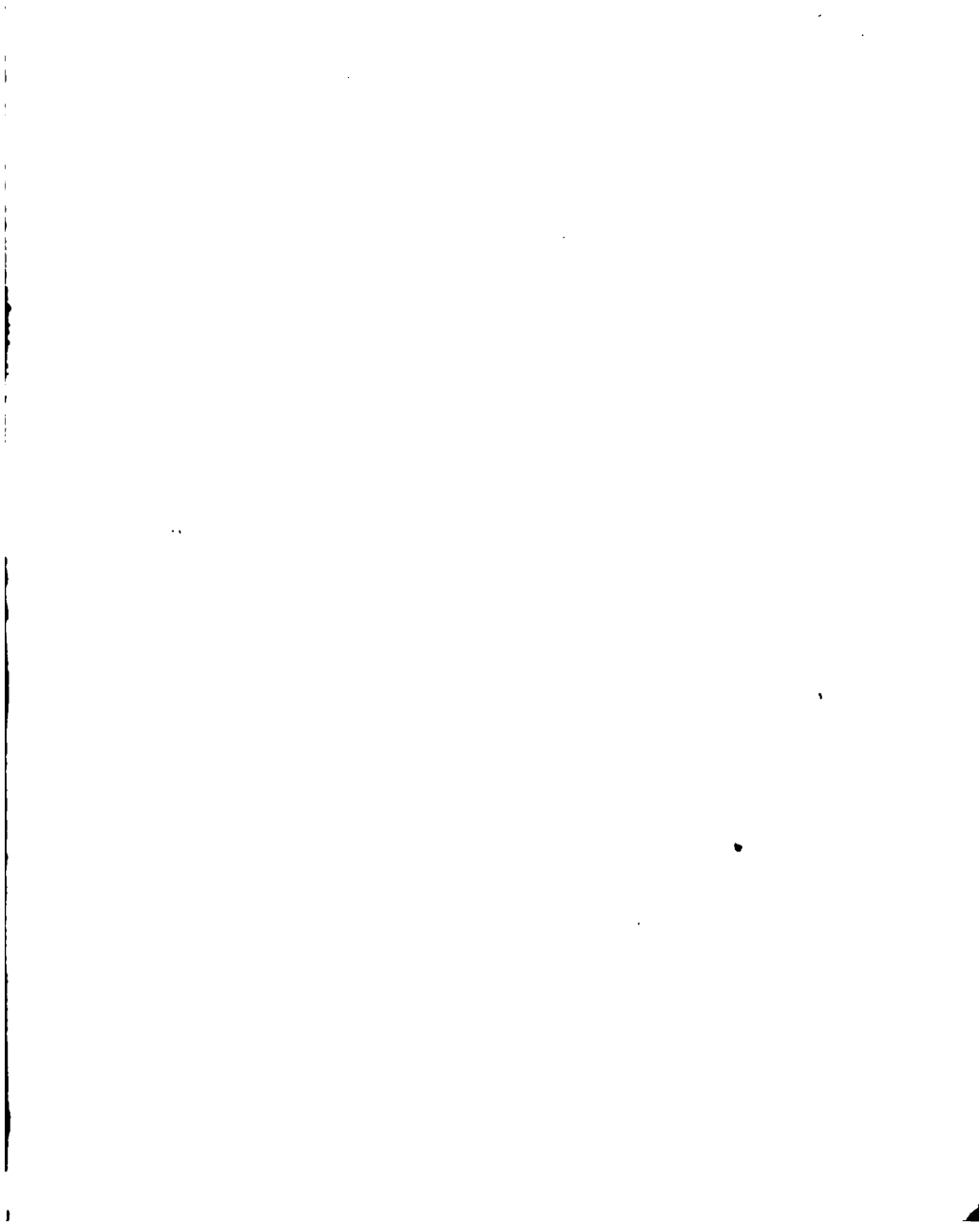






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MY BROTHER JACK.









# MY BROTHER JACK;

OR,

*THE STORY OF WHAT-D'YE-CALL'EM.*

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

"He would answer to Hi! or to any loud cry,  
To What-you-may-call-'em, or What-was-his-name;  
But especially Thingamy-jig."—*Hunting of the Snark.*

FROM THE FRENCH OF A. DAUDET.

TRANSLATED BY L. FORD.



ILLUSTRATED BY P. PHILIPPOTEAUX.

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# MY BROTHER JACK.

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## Part I.

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE SILK-MILL—MY ISLAND.

I WAS born on the 13th of May, 18—, in a small town of Languedoc, where, as in all the towns of the South of France, are to be found plenty of sun, a considerable amount of dust, and two or three Roman remains.

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My father, M. Eyssette, who was then in the silk-trade, had a large mill just outside the town, and there he had built himself a charming house, which was completely shaded by plane-trees, and was separated from the mill by a large garden.

There I was born, and there I passed the earliest years of my life. They were the happiest too, and deep in my memory lies the pleasant recollection of the never-forgotten garden, and plane-trees, and factory. When my parents were ruined, and I had to leave these things, I bewailed them as if they had been living beings.

I must begin my story by saying that the period of my birth was marked by no good luck to the house of Eyssette. Our old cook, Annou, has often told me how my father, who was then on a journey, received at the same time the news of my appearance in the world, and of the failure of one of his correspondents at Marseilles, by which he lost forty thousand francs; so that M. Eyssette, full of joy on the one hand, of vexation on the other, did not know whether to weep for the failure of his correspondent at Marseilles, or to laugh for the happy arrival of his little Daniel.

You ought to have wept, my good Mons. Eyssette ; you ought to have wept for both !

From the hour of my birth, misfortunes crowded on my parents from all quarters. First of all there was the loss at Marseilles ; then we had two fires in one year ; then the strike among the weavers ; then came our quarrel with my Uncle Baptiste ; a very expensive lawsuit with our dye-merchants ; and at last, to crown all, came the Revolution of 18—, which, like all Revolutions, began by putting a stop to trade. Thenceforward the business was completely crippled. By degrees the work-rooms grew empty, every week some branch of the trade dropped.

It was pitiable to see our house gradually declining, like a sick man's failing strength, sinking a little lower every day. First the second story was abandoned ; next the yard at the back was shut up. This went on for two years, during which the factory was slowly dying. At last, one day, no workmen came, the bell was not rung, the water-wheel ceased to creak, the ponds where the pieces of silk were steeped lay unruffled, and there was not a soul in the house but my father and mother, old Annou, my brother Jack, and myself ; and in the

mill there were only old Colomb, the porter, and his son little Rouget, to have an eye to the deserted work-rooms.

The end had come : we were ruined.

I was then six or seven years old. I was a delicate and sickly child, and my parents had not chosen to send me to school. My mother had taught me to read and write, and to speak a little Spanish, which, with a few airs I could play on the guitar, caused me to be looked on in the family as a sort of little prodigy. Thanks to this method of education, I never stirred from home, and I was a spectator of the lingering agony of the house of Eyssette in its minutest details.

I confess I was not much concerned at the process. I soon found one very pleasant side to our ruin, for it gave me liberty to play as I liked all over the mills ; a delight which, when the works were going on, I had been permitted to enjoy only on Sundays. I used to say gravely to Rouget, " The mill is mine now ; it is all mine to play in." And Rouget believed me. Poor little Rouget, he believed whatever I told him.

But in the house, the crash was by no means taken so cheerfully. My father's temper all at once became terrible. He was naturally impetuous, expansive, excit-

able, prone to exaggeration ; he delighted in noise and bustle, and was never easy unless he kept everything about him going on at full speed. Yet, though somewhat hasty in action and somewhat imperious in manner, he was on the whole an excellent man. Misfortune did not cast him down, it exasperated him. From morning to night he was in a state of fury, which, having no definite object, was directed against everything around him ; the sun, the east wind, Jack, Annou, the Revolution. O that Revolution ! To listen to my father, you would have vowed that the Revolution was aimed and directed against us alone.

The truth was that the commercial crisis, which never fails to accompany a crisis in the political world, had found the factory shaking, and could not restore stability to it. Revolutions have a great deal to answer for.

To this very day, when M. Eyssette, now an old man, (long may Heaven spare him to me !) feels his fit of gout coming on, he groans out, as he turns painfully on his couch, O those Revolutions !

At the time I was telling you of, my father never had the gout, but the agony of finding himself ruined put him in such a state that no one dared approach him. It was necessary to bleed him twice in ten days. No

one spoke in his presence ; we were afraid. At meals we whispered when we asked for bread. We could not even weep in his presence ; to be sure the moment his back was turned there was nothing but sobbing from the top to the bottom of the house. My mother, old Annou, my brother Jack, and my grown-up brother, the abbé, when he came to see us—they were all at it. My mother, as was natural enough, wept to see my father miserable ; the abbé and old Annou wept to see her weep ; and as for Jack, though too young to enter into our misfortunes (he was scarcely two years older than I) he cried because he could not help it, because he liked it. He was a singular child, that brother of mine, he had a talent for crying. As long as I can remember him, I see him with red eyes and cheeks streaming with tears. Morning, noon, and night, in school, in the house, out walking, he was for ever crying. When he was asked, “What is the matter with you ?” he would reply, “Nothing.” And the strange thing is, nothing was the matter. He cried as one would blow one’s nose ; but oftener, that was all. Sometimes my father, out of all patience with him, would say to my mother, “Look at that absurd child, look at him ! he is a mere river !”

And my mother would answer in her soft voice, "Never mind, my dear, that will pass off as he grows older ; when I was his age, I was the same." But Jack grew, and grew fast, yet "that" did not pass off. On the contrary, the singular aptitude for shedding torrents of tears without cause or reason went on increasing.

So our parents' misery was a stroke of good fortune to him, he could cry to his heart's content day after day without any one's asking him, "What are you crying for now?" In short, our ruin had its bright side for both of us. As for me, I was perfectly happy. Nobody took any notice of me. I took advantage of this to play all day long with Rouget in the deserted work-rooms, where our footsteps echoed as if we were in a church, and in the spacious yards over which the grass was already creeping. This young Rouget, the porter's son, was a stout boy about twelve years old, as strong as an ox, as faithful as a dog, as simple as a goose, and was especially remarkable for a great shock head of red hair, to which he owed his nick-name, Rouget.

But I must tell you he was not Rouget to me. He was in turn, my man Friday, a whole tribe of savages, or a crew in mutiny, just as I chose.



And I was not Daniel Eyssette. I was that wonderful man dressed in skins, whose adventures I had lately read, Robinson Crusoe himself! What pleasant fancies they were! After supper in the evening, I used to read my Crusoe over and over again, I learnt it by heart, and all day long I used to act it. Everything around me was made to enter into my play. The factory was no longer a factory; it was my desert island (how desert!). The ponds were the ocean, the garden stood for the virgin forest. The swarms of cicadas that chirruped in the plane-trees were actors in my play, though they knew nothing about it. Rouget did not know much better how important a part belonged to him. If he had been asked who Robinson Crusoe was, he would have been sorely puzzled. I must say, however, that he conscientiously believed in what he was about, and that for imitating the yells of the savages he had not his equal. I don't know where he had learnt it. All I can say is, that he might have frightened a brave man with the howls which he hawked up from the bottom of his lungs, shaking his great red poll all the time. Even I myself was sometimes startled, and used to whisper to him, "Not so loud, Rouget; you frighten me."

Unfortunately, imitating the shouts of savages was not Rouget's only accomplishment ; his education being totally neglected, he knew an infinite number of those street-words which do not enter into the vocabulary of well-educated children. In our play I picked up some of these words from him ; and one day, in the middle of dinner, some dreadful word—an oath perhaps—escaped me, I don't know how.

There was general consternation.

“ Who taught you to say that ? Where did you hear it ? ” Here was an event ! My father began talking at once about sending me to a reformatory. My eldest brother, the abbé, for whom I had a great respect, declared that in the first place I must go to confession, as I had arrived at years of discretion. I was taken to church. What a business it was ! For two whole nights I could not sleep. How many sins there were ! They were of several sorts. Perhaps I put the little ones at the top ; but that mattered little ; the others were all to be dragged to light too ; and when, on my knees in the oak confessional, I had to lay them all before the priest of the Recollets, I thought I should die of fright and confusion.

It was over. I would not play any more with Rouget. I knew now that the Evil Spirit assumes all kinds of shapes when he wants to tempt us ; and nothing could have got the idea out of my head that he had hidden himself in the body of Master Rouget, that I might learn to blaspheme the Holiest Name.

Accordingly, when I went home to the factory, my first care was to tell Friday that he was to stay in his own quarters from henceforth. Unhappy Friday ! This decree cut him to the heart, but he obeyed without a murmur. Sometimes I used to see him near the porter's lodge, close to the workshops ; he would stand there sadly, and when he saw that I was looking at him, the wretch would utter the most fearful yells in order to touch my heart, shaking his fiery mane ; but the more he bellowed, the further I kept from him. I thought he was like that roaring lion the priest had told me about, *quærens quem devoret*, and I cried to him, "Go away ! you made me sin the worst sin I ever committed ; I can't bear you !"

Rouget persevered in his howling and groaning for several days. At last, one morning, his father, tired of these bellowings in his house, apprenticed him, and sent

him to bellow elsewhere, and I saw him no more. Poor Rouget !

My enthusiasm for Robinson Crusoe was not the least abated. Just about this time Uncle Baptiste suddenly took a dislike to his parrot, and gave it to me.

The parrot took Friday's place. I installed him in a fine cage in my winter dwelling, and there behold me ! more Crusoe-like than ever, passing whole days trying to make the bird say, "Poor Robin Crusoe." Will you believe it ? this parrot, which Uncle Baptiste had given me on purpose to get rid of its eternal prattle, persisted in absolute silence from the moment I had him. Not only he would not repeat Poor Robinson ; I never could get him to say one word ; but nevertheless I was fond of him, and took the greatest care of him.

My parrot and I were leading this life together in the most absolute solitude, when one day a wonderful event happened. That morning I had left my hut early, and, armed to the teeth, I set out to make a voyage of discovery in my island. All of a sudden I saw, coming towards me, three or four persons who were speaking

loud and gesticulating vehemently. Good heavens! men in my island! I had barely time to throw myself flat on my face behind a thicket of oleanders. The men passed without seeing me. I thought I recognized the voice of the porter, which comforted me a little, but as soon as they were some way off I followed them at a little distance to see what would come of all this. The strangers stayed a long time on my island. They examined it from one end to the other. I saw them enter my cave, and sound the depth of my ocean with their canes; they stopped now and then and shook their heads. My only fear was lest they should discover my dwelling. Heavens! thought I, what would become of me! Happily, this catastrophe did not happen, and, at the end of half-an-hour, the men withdrew, without having suspected that the island was inhabited.

As soon as they had disappeared, I ran to one of my huts, shut myself up there, and spent the rest of the day in conjecturing who these strangers were and what they came for. Alas! I was soon to know!

That evening, at supper, my father announced in a solemn voice that the mill was sold, and that, within a



Good heavens ! men in my island !

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month, we were all to go to Lyons, which was to be our abode in future.

It was a terrible blow. I thought the sky would fall. The mill sold! well! and my island, and my caves, and my huts! Alas for the island, the caves, and the huts! my father had been obliged to part with everything; we must leave them all. How I cried!

During the whole month, while everybody in the house was packing up glass and crockery, I used to roam through my beloved mill. You may imagine I had no heart to play. I wandered from room to room, sat down in the corners, and, looking at the various objects about me, I talked to them as if they were persons.

I said to the plane-trees, "Farewell, old friends!" to the waters, "It is all over; we shall see one another no more." At the end of the garden there was a pomegranate-tree, whose brilliant red blossoms opened full in the sunshine. I said to the tree with a sob, "Give me one of your flowers." I placed the flower in my bosom, as a memorial. I was very miserable. Nevertheless, in the midst of my grief two things comforted me a little; the first was the thought that I was going to travel on



board ship, the second that I had permission to take my parrot with me. I said to myself that Robinson Crusoe had left his island under nearly similar circumstances, and this gave me heart.

At length the day of departure arrived. My father had been already a week at Lyons; he had preceded us with the heavy furniture, and was to meet us at the boat. I set out then, accompanied by my mother, Jack, and old Annou. My eldest brother, the Abbé, was not going with us, but he accompanied us to the diligence at Beaucaire, and the porter was there too. He went first, wheeling a great barrow laden with trunks. My brother followed, with my mother leaning on his arm. Alas! my poor Abbé, whom I was never to see again! Next came old Annou, with an enormous blue umbrella and Jack as supporters. Jack was delighted to go to Lyons, but he was crying all the same. Last of all, at the end of the procession, came I, Daniel Eyssette, with a face all gravity, carrying the parrot in its cage, and looking back at every step to my beloved mill.

As the little procession went on, the pomegranate-tree stretched as far as it possibly could over the garden wall to have a last look. The plane-trees waved their boughs

in token of farewell. I, much agitated, sent silent kisses to them all from my finger-tips.

I left my island on the 30th of September, 18—.





## CHAPTER II.

### THE RHONE—THE PARROT—THE BEETLES.

O DAYS of my childhood ! what deep impressions you have left me ! It seems to me like yesterday—that voyage on the Rhone ! I can still see the boat, the passengers, the crew. I can hear the noise of the paddles and the whistle of the engine. The captain was called Geneste ; the crew's cook Montelimart. One doesn't forget these trifles.

The voyage lasted three days. I passed them on

deck, going below to the saloon merely for meals and sleeping.

All the rest of the time I spent in the bow close to the anchor. There was a great bell there, which they used to ring when we approached a town. I sat beside this bell among the coils of rope. I put the parrot's cage between my legs, and looked over the side. The Rhone was so broad that I could scarcely see its banks. I wished it had been still broader, and that its name had been the sea! The sky was bright, the water was green. Large boats were floating down with the stream; men fording the shallows of the river on muleback passed near us, singing as they went.

Now and then our boat coasted some islet covered with reeds and willows. A desert island! I cried to myself, and I devoured it with my eyes. Towards the close of the third day I thought we were going to have a squall. The sky was suddenly overcast, a thick fog curled along the water, a great light was fixed on the bow, and all these signs made me feel rather uneasy.

Just then some one close to me said, "There is Lyons." At that instant the great bell began to ring. It was Lyons, indeed. Through the fog I saw the blurred lights

on either side of the river ; we passed under a bridge, then under another. Each time we did so, the great funnel of the engine bent down and vomited torrents of black smoke, which made us cough.

There was a fearful routing about of everything on board ; passengers seeking their luggage, sailors swearing as they rolled huge casks away into the darkness. It was raining. I hastened to rejoin my mother, my brother Jack, and old Annou, who were at the other end of the boat, and there we stayed, all four cowering close together under Annou's great blue umbrella, while the vessel was taking up her berth alongside the quay, and the landing began.

I really think if my father had not come to fetch us, we should never have got away from that spot. He came towards us, feeling his way, calling out "Where are you, where are you ?" At the well-known voice we cried, "Here we are, all right !" with an inexpressible feeling of joy and relief.

He embraced us hastily, took me in one hand, my brother in the other, and crying to the women "Follow me !" he marched us off. What a man that was ! We made our way with difficulty along the slippery deck.

It was quite dark, and at every step we stumbled against some package or chest.

Suddenly from the fore-part of the vessel a lamentable shriek reached our ears. It said "Robin! Poor Robin Crusoe!"

"O heavens!" I exclaimed; and I tried to get my hand free from my father's; he thought I had slipped, and grasped me still tighter. Shriller and more doleful the shriek reached me again, "Robin! Poor Robin Crusoe!" "My parrot, my parrot!" I cried.

"So then he can speak now?" said Jack.

I should think he did speak, indeed! he might have been heard a mile off.

In the confusion I had forgotten him. I had left him in the bow beside the anchor, and there he was screaming with all his might. Unhappily we were a long way from him, and the captain was calling "Make haste, make haste, there!"

"We will come back for him to-morrow," said my father; "nothing goes astray on board the boats," and in spite of my tears he dragged me away.

Alack! when we sent for him the next day he was not to be found. Judge of my despair! No Friday, no

parrot, Robinson Crusoe was an impossibility. Moreover, all the good will in the world could scarcely create a desert island in the fourth story of a dirty damp house in the Rue Lanterne. Oh that horrible house ! I shall never lose the sight of it—the clammy staircase, the courtyard like a well, the shoemaker who acted as porter, with his stall against the pump—it was all detestable.

The evening of our arrival, when old Annou went to take possession of her kitchen, she uttered loud cries of distress. “The Black Beetles ! the Black Beetles !” We ran to her—what a sight ! The kitchen was alive with these horrid creatures ; it swarmed with all the creatures to which the Academy gives the generic name of *Blattæ* ; they were on the dresser, on the walls, in the drawers, on the chimney-piece, on the shelves, on the floor ; wherever you stepped you trod on them without intending it. Annou killed a great many, but the faster she killed the faster they came : they came up through the sink, and when the sink was stopped up, they came from somewhere else. We were at last obliged to have a cat on purpose to keep them down ; and every night there was a terrific slaughter.



**"The black beetles ! the black beetles !"**

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The black beetles gave me a horror of Lyons from the first evening.

The next day was still worse. We had to adopt new habits, to change the hours of our meals. The loaves had a different shape from our own; they were called "crowns." What a name for a loaf! At the butcher's, where old Annou asked for a pork steak, the man laughed in her face; the savage did not know what a "carbonade" was. How I hated it all!

On Sundays for a little diversion the whole family went with umbrellas to walk on the quays of the Rhone. Instinctively we always went to the south side towards Perrache. "We seem to be a little nearer home," my mother would say. Poor mother, she drooped even more than I. These family walks were dreary enough. My father scolded, Jack cried the whole time. I always went behind the rest; I do not know why, I was ashamed to be seen in the street, I suppose, because I was conscious that we made but a sorry figure.

At the end of a month Annou fell sick; the fogs were killing her; we had to send her back to the south. The poor woman, who was passionately attached to my mother, could not make up her mind to leave us; she

entreated that she might stay ; she promised not to die. We had to carry her to the boat. When she reached the south, she married out of sheer despair.

When Annou was gone we did not hire another servant, which seemed to me to complete our misery. The porter's wife used to come up to do the heavy work ; my mother's beautiful white hands, which I loved so much to kiss, were scorched over the hot-hearth fire. Jack was charged with the marketing ; he was given a great basket to carry on his arm, and was directed to buy so-and-so. He bought so-and-so very well, crying all the time, however, if you please. Poor Jack was not happy any more than I. Our father, tired of seeing him eternally in tears, had taken a sort of dislike to him, and gave him more than his share of snubbing. All day long was heard, " Jack, you idiot ; Jack, you donkey." The truth is that when our father, whose temper was soured by misfortune, was by, the unlucky boy could not keep his wits about him, and did not appear to advantage ; the grimaces he made in his efforts to repress his tears were something too ugly. Fear made him stupid.

I will tell you the story of the Pitcher. One evening,

just as we were on the point of sitting down to table, we found that there was not a drop of water in the house. "If you like I will go and get some," said that good fellow Jack, and he took the great heavy stone pitcher. My father shrugged his shoulders. "If Jack goes for it, the pitcher will be broken, that's quite certain." "You hear, Jack," said our mother in her gentle voice, "be careful, my child ; do not break it." M. Eyssette went on, "O you may tell him not to break it, as much as you please, but he will break it all the same." "But why am I to break it?" sighed the deplorable voice of poor Jack. "I don't say you are to break it, I only say that you will break it," replied my father, in a tone which admitted of no reply. Jack made none, he took up the pitcher nervously, with an air that said, "Oh, I am to break it, am I? well, we shall see." Five minutes passed—ten minutes—no Jack. My mother grew anxious, "If only nothing has happened to him!" "What on earth should happen to him?" said my father in a querulous tone ; "he has broken the pitcher, and he does not dare to come in." But as he spoke (for with all his roughness he was the kindest man in the world) he got up and went to the door to look out and see

what had become of Jack. He had not to go far. Jack was on the landing-place at the door, with empty hands, silent, petrified. When he saw our father he turned pale, and said in a faint heart-rending voice. "I have broken it"—and he had broken it.

In the annals of the house of Eyssette we used to call that "the story of the pitcher."

We had been about two months at Lyons when our parents began to think of our studies. My father would have liked to send us to the college, but it was too expensive. "Suppose we send them to a chorister's school," said my mother; "boys seem to do so well there." My father liked the idea, and as St. Nizier was the nearest church, we were sent to the chorister's school of St. Nizier. It was a curious place. Instead of being content to cram us merely with Latin and Greek, as at other schools, we were taught besides to serve high and low mass, to sing anthems and antiphons, to make genuflexions, and to swing the censer without sending the charcoal about, which is very difficult. Our business in short was to serve the church. At least once a week the sacristan would say, taking a pinch of snuff, and with a solemn air, "To-morrow, gentle-

men, there will be no morning school; we have a funeral!"

We have a funeral! Need it be told that with all the lightness of our age we looked on it as the announcement of a holiday. Then there came christenings, weddings, a visit from my lord the Bishop; occasionally, when we were least expecting it, the Viaticum had to be carried to a dying person. We were very proud when we were allowed to accompany the Viaticum. The priest walked under a little canopy of red velvet, carrying the Host and the holy oil. Two choir boys supported the canopy, two others escorted it with long gilt tapers; a fifth walked in front shaking the rattle. Generally this was my office. As the Host passed along the streets, the men uncovered their heads, the women crossed themselves. When we passed a guard, the sentry cried "Turn out!" the soldiers hastened to put themselves in rank. "Present arms, kneel!" said the officer. Clang went the muskets, the drums rolled. I rattled thrice as at the Sanctus, and so we passed.

We had a dim consciousness that we were taking part in a solemn ceremonial; but in our young minds the details of the performance made us forget its meaning.

Each of us had in a little press a complete ecclesiastical set out : a black cassock with a long skirt, an alb, a surplice with wide sleeves stiff with starch, black silk stockings, two caps, one of cloth, the other of velvet ; bands edged with little white dots ; in short everything that was necessary. Certainly it was a queer school.

Apparently the dress became me. "He is delicious in it," said my mother. Unfortunately I was very little, and that filled me with chagrin. Only imagine, even on tip-toes I scarcely reached above the white stockings of our beadle, M. Caduffe ; and then I was so slight ! Once during the service, when I was changing the place of the Gospels, the great book was so heavy that it made me topple over. I fell at my full length on the steps of the altar ; the desk was broken, the service was interrupted. It was a Whit-Sunday : what a scandal ! I promise you that day, Jack, frightened as he was by my fall, did not weep alone. I took up his part, and we cried to our hearts' content. I ought to say, however, that I left off first. When mass was over, the good priest instead of scolding me, did all in his power to make me forget my mishap ; he popped a lozenge into my mouth, and gave me a fine picture all coloured and gilded.

Except for these little mortifications arising from my diminutive stature, I liked my lot well enough ; and often when we were going to bed Jack and I used to say, " If only father will let us be choristers all our lives ! " Unhappily our desire was not fated to be fulfilled.

An old friend of the family, who was rector of a university in the south, wrote one day to my father, to say that if an exhibition for a day scholar at the college of Lyons would be acceptable for one of his sons, it might be had.

" It will be for Daniel," said my father. " And Jack ? " said my mother. " Oh I shall keep him at home," replied my father. " He will be very useful ; besides I perceive that he has a taste for business ; he shall be a merchant."

Honestly I do not know how my father arrived at the conclusion that Jack had a taste for business ; at that time he had a taste for very little but crying, and if he had been consulted—but he was not consulted, nor I either.

When I arrived at the college the first thing that struck me was that I was the only boy in a blouse. At Lyons a blouse is never worn by a rich man's son, none but children in the streets wear it. I had on a little



blouse with a pattern of squares on it ; I had it when we lived at the silk-mill. When I went into the class-room all the pupils tittered. "Look, he has got on a blouse !" The professor himself, as if he foresaw all the difficulties that blouse would entail, made a face, at least I thought so. As for the under-master, I cannot tell why, he conceived an aversion for me on the spot ; he never called me by my name, he always said, "Hi! you!—boy there! little—What-d'ye-call'em ?" Yet I told him more than twenty times that my name was Daniel Eyssette. In the end my companions took to calling me "Little What-d'ye-call'em," and the nickname stuck by me. That wretched blouse !

It was not in my dress alone that I was unlike the other boys : they had fine paper-cases of yellow leather, boxwood inkstands with a sweet smell, bound copy-books, new books full of notes at the foot of the pages—my books were old bargains picked up on the book-stalls on the quay, musty, faded, smelling of mildew, the covers always torn, and sometimes pages missing. Jack indeed did his best to bind them with thick pasteboard and glue ; but he put too much glue, and that did not smell nice. He had also manufactured a paper-case with

many pockets for me ; it was convenient enough, but it smelt of glue. Jack had at this time a rage for glue and pasteboard, just as he used to have a fancy for tears. He had constantly a number of little pots of glue before the fire, and the moment he could escape from the warehouse he was pasting and binding ; the rest of his time was spent in carrying parcels through the town, writing to dictation, going to market, in short learning trade. As for me, I was aware that when one has to answer to " Little What-d'ye-call'em," one must work twice as hard as others in order to equal them, and in good truth " Little What-d'ye-call'em " set manfully to work.

Brave " Little What-d'ye-call'em," I can see you still in your room in the middle of winter, with no fire, working away at the study table with a rug wrapped round your legs, while the sleet was driving against the window-panes. In the warehouse the voice of M. Eyssette was heard dictating,—

" Your esteemed favour of the 18th to hand ;" and Jack's repeating, " Your esteemed favour of the 18th to hand."

From time to time the room door opened gently, our mother came in ; she went over on tip-toe to Little What-d'ye-call'em. " Hist ! you are working, my child ?" she

whispered. "Yes, mother." "And you are not cold?" "Oh no!" Little What-d'ye-call'em did not tell the truth then, for he was very cold indeed. Then his mother would sit down beside him with her knitting, and stay there for hours counting her stitches under her breath, with now and then a heavy sigh.

Poor mother! she was always thinking of that south country which she had no hope to see again. Alas! to her sorrow, and to all our sorrow, she was to see it again, and before long.





### CHAPTER III.

"PRAY FOR HIM!"

IT was on a Monday in July. That day when I was out of school I let myself be persuaded to join a game of prisoner's base, and when I made up my mind to go home, it was much later than I should have wished. I ran all the way from the Place des Terreaux to the Rue Lanterne without stopping, my books slung over my shoulder, and my cap between my teeth. But as I was in dreadful awe of my father, I paused to take breath on

the staircase, just long enough to invent some story to account for my delay, and then I boldly rang the bell.

My father himself opened the door to me.

"How late you are!" said he.

I began to falter out the story I had prepared, but he did not give me time to finish. He drew me to his bosom, and gave me a long, silent embrace.

I who expected a good scolding at the very least, was amazed at this reception. My first thought was that the priest of St. Nizier was going to dine with us. I knew by experience that we were never scolded when that was the case; but when I entered the dining-room I saw at a glance that I was mistaken, only two places were laid, my father's and mine. "And mother? and Jack?" I asked in surprise.

My father answered in a gentle voice which was not habitual to him, "Your mother and Jack are gone, Daniel; your brother the Abbé is very ill. Then, seeing that I turned quite white, he added in a firm voice to reassure me, "When I say very ill, it is a figure of speech; we got a letter to say that he was obliged to keep his bed: you know your mother—it was her wish to set out

at once, and I sent Jack to take care of her. It will not be anything of consequence; and now sit down and let us eat, for I am dying of hunger."

I sat down without saying a word; but my heart was heavy, and I had to try hard to keep from tears when I thought that my tall brother, the Abbé, was very ill.

We dined sadly, sitting opposite to one another without speaking. My father ate fast, drank eagerly, and then suddenly stopped and sat thinking. I sat motionless at the other end of the table, as if I was in a stupor. I thought over the beautiful stories the Abbé used to tell me whenever he came to the mills. I remembered his look, holding up his cassock quite high as he passed the ponds. I remembered the day of his first mass, when all the family were present. How handsome he looked as he turned towards us with outspread arms, saying, "Dominus vobiscum," in such a sweet voice that his mother wept for joy! Then I thought of him away there in bed, ill (oh, very ill—something told me that); and what redoubled my grief was that a voice seemed to cry in the bottom of my heart, "Perhaps, if you had been a better lad, God would hear your prayers that your

brother should be restored to health. Why did not you come straight home? Why did you tell that falsehood?" In despair I said to myself, "Never, no, never—never will I play 'prisoner's base' again when I am coming home from the college!"

Dinner ended, the lamp was lighted, and the evening began. My father placed his great account-books on the table-cloth among the fragments of the dessert, and went on casting up his accounts out loud. Finette, the conqueror of the beetles, was prowling round the table with a melancholy mew.

I had opened the window, and was leaning on my elbows, looking out. It was dark, and the air was heavy. From below came sounds of people laughing and chatting before their doors, and I heard the distant roll of the drums at Fort Loyasse. I had passed some minutes sadly enough thinking of various things, and idly looking out into the darkness, when a violent pull at the door-bell made me start from my window. I cast a terrified glance at my father, and I thought I saw on his face the shudder of anguish and dread which had seized me. The bell had frightened him also.

"Some one at the bell!" said he in a low voice.

"Stop, father! let me go!"—and I flew to the door. A man was standing on the threshold. I could just dimly see him in the shadow, holding out something towards me.

"A telegram," said he.

"A telegram! Good heavens! what about?"

I took it shuddering, and was closing the door, but the man kept it open with his foot, and said coldly,—

"You must sign the paper."

Sign? I did not know; this was the first telegram I had ever received.

"Who is it, Daniel?" cried my father; his voice was trembling.

I replied, "Nobody—a beggar," and, making a sign to the man to wait, I ran to my room, groped my way to the ink-bottle, dipped my pen and ran back. The man said,—

"Sign there."

I signed with a shaking hand, by the light of the lamp on the staircase; then I shut the door, and went back with the telegram hidden under my



blouse. Hidden under my blouse! Oh, messenger of woe! I would fain have hidden thee from my father, for I knew beforehand the tidings thou wert to tell. And when I opened thee I learnt nothing new—nothing new—nothing but what my heart had too well guessed.

“It was a beggar?” said my father, looking at me.

“A beggar,” I replied without a blush; and in order not to arouse his suspicion, I went back to my place at the window. I stayed there for some time motionless, while the paper which I clasped to my bosom seemed to burn me.

At times I tried to reason with myself, to take courage, to say to myself, “How can you tell? Perhaps it is good news; perhaps it is to say that he is recovering.” But in my heart I knew it was not true. I knew I was trying to deceive myself, and that the message did not say he was recovering.

At last I determined to go to my own room to see once for all what it was. I sauntered out of the dining-room as slowly as I could; but when I reached my room, I lighted the lamp with feverish haste. How my hands

trembled as I opened the message of death! What scalding tears rained upon it when I had opened it! I read it over twenty times in hopes I had made some mistake. Alas! I might read and re-read it; turn it what way I would, it would mean nothing but what it told me at first—what I knew it would tell me,—

"He is dead. Pray for him!"

How long I stood there, weeping over the despatch, I cannot tell; I only remember how my eyes were burning, and that before I left my room I bathed my face for a long time. Then I went back to the dining-room, clenching in my hand the thrice-detested message.

And now, what should I do next? How should I set about breaking the dreadful tidings to my father? What infatuation had impelled me to keep it to myself at first? A little sooner or a little later, he must know all. What madness! If I had but gone straight to him the moment it came, we should have opened it together, and he would have learnt all by this time. While these thoughts passed through my mind, I crept to the table, and sat down as close as I could to my father. Poor

father! he had shut up his books and was amusing himself by tickling Finette's white nose with the feather of his quill pen. It gave me a shock to see him amusing himself. I watched his pleased face, half lit up by the light of the lamp, growing animated, and on the point of laughing. I was going to cry out, "Oh, do not laugh, pray do not laugh!"

Then, as I was thus watching him with the telegram in my hand, my father looked up. Our eyes met. I do not know what he read in mine; I only know that I saw his face change suddenly, that a great cry burst from his breast, and in a voice to break one's heart he said,—

"He is dead!"

The paper dropped from my hand, I fell into his arms sobbing, and we wept for a long time wrapped in each other's arms, while at our feet Finette was playing with the message, the dreadful message of death, the cause of all our tears.

That is a long time ago. It is a long time since they laid him to his rest in the ground—my dear brother whom I loved so well.



We wept for a long time wrapped in each other's arms.

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To this day, when I get a telegram, I never open it without a shiver. I think I am going to read over again, "He is dead," and that I must "Pray for him."





## CHAPTER IV.

### THE RED COPY-BOOK.

IN some old missals we see quaint illuminations where our Lady of the Seven Sorrows is represented with a deep furrow on each cheek. The artist has chosen this way of saying to us, "See in this divine track of tears how she wept!"

I saw this furrow on the wasted cheek of my mother when she came back from Lyons after burying her son.

Poor mother! she never smiled after that; her dress

was always black, her face always sad ; her heart, like her form, was clothed in deep mourning, and she never left it off.

Nothing else was changed in our house ; everything was a little more dreary—that was all. The priest of St. Nizier said some masses for the repose of the soul of the Abbé. Two black garments were fashioned out of an old wrapping-coat of our father's for us boys ; and our melancholy life went on as before.

One evening, some time after our dear Abbé's death, when Jack and I were going to bed, I was astonished to see him carefully close and lock the door of our room, and come close to me, laying his finger on his lips with a solemn air of mystery.

I should have told you that a great change had taken place in Jack's habits since his return from the South. First of all, he never cried now, or scarcely ever ; next, his crazy passion for pasting and binding had nearly disappeared. Now and then little pots of glue were put on the fire, but he showed no energy about it ; if you wanted a portfolio, you must go down on your knees to get it. It is almost incredible, but a wretched bonnet-box, which my mother wanted, was on the stocks for



eight days. My father and mother did not observe all this, but it was very plain to me that Jack was at something. I had surprised him several times in the warehouse, talking to himself and gesticulating. At night he scarcely slept ; I used to hear him muttering to himself, then he would suddenly jump out of bed and pace up and down the room. All this was unnatural, and made me uneasy. I thought my brother was going out of his mind. Accordingly, when I saw him lock our door, the idea came strongly into my head, and I trembled with fright. My poor dear Jack ! He saw nothing of what I fancied, and taking one of my hands gravely in his,—

“Daniel,” said he, “I am going to confide something to you, but you must swear never to tell.”

I saw directly that he was not out of his mind, so I answered,—

“I swear, Jack.”

“Well, you will never guess. Hush ! I am writing a poem—a great poem.”

“A poem, Jack ? You writing a poem ?”

Without a word, he drew from under his vest a red copy-book, which he had made himself, and on the

first leaf of which was written in his very best writing,—

RELIGION :

A POEM IN TWELVE CANTOS.

By J. EYSSETTE.

This was something so grand that I grew giddy. Can you conceive it? Jack, my brother Jack, a boy of eleven years of age—the boy of the sobs and the glue-pots—writing “Religion : a Poem in Twelve Cantos :” and no one had suspected it. He went on going with his market-basket to buy vegetables ; and father went on saying to him, “You are a donkey.” Poor dear Jack! I could have hugged him if I dared, but the thought of his poem in twelve cantos made me keep at a respectful distance. To say truth, however, the poem was a long way from being finished. I really believe that only the first four lines of the first canto were written ; but then you know the great thing in these affairs is to get under weigh. As he said himself, “Now that I have the first four lines written out, all the rest is only a matter of time.

Unluckily there is a fate about poems as about other things, and the twelve cantos of “Religion ” were fated

never to go further than the four lines. The unhappy poet beat his brains in vain, and at last, tired out, dismissed the muse (people used to talk about the muse in those days). That very day his sighs returned in full force, and the glue-pots resumed their place on the hearth. The red copy-book had its destiny also ; Jack said, " I will give it to you ; write whatever you please in it." What do you think I wrote in it ? I had caught the infection, and I wrote poetry—" Poems by What-d'ye-call'em."

Now, with the reader's permission, I shall skip over four or five years of my life. I hasten on to the spring of 18—, an era in the annals of the family. In all families there are such. The reader loses nothing by not having the record of those five years. It was the old story over again : little insignificant amusements, tears, and dreariness, business not succeeding, blustering creditors ; my mother's diamonds were sold, our silver went to the pawnbroker's, sheets went into holes, our trousers had patches in them. We pinched and screwed more and more, and still there was the never-ending question, How shall we manage to-morrow ? We started at the bailiff's ring ; the porter grinned as we passed in or out ; then

came borrowing, and then protested bills : and so things went on till 18—. That was the year I was in the Philosophy course at college. If I recollect right, I must have been rather a prig, thinking a good deal of myself as a poet and a scholar ; but I had not grown taller than a jack-boot, and I had not a hair on my chin.

One morning, as I was going to my philosophy lecture, my father called me into the warehouse, and said, in his roughest tone, “ Daniel, you may pitch your books into the fire ; you are not to go to college any more.” He said no more, but began pacing up and down ; he seemed much agitated, and I was struck dumb. After a long silence he resumed, “ Daniel, I have some very bad news to tell you—almost as bad as can be. We must all break up and separate, for—” Here a loud sob was heard behind the half-open door of the warehouse.

“ Jack, you are a donkey !” cried my father, without turning his head, and then he went on,—

“ When we came to Lyons, eight years ago, I hoped by dint of hard work to rebuild our fortunes ; but luck is against me, and I have only succeeded in plunging us over head and ears in debt and misery. We are so deep

in the mire now that there is but one thing left for us to do—that is, to sell the little that is left to us; and now that you are grown up, we must each do the best we can for ourselves.”

My father was interrupted by a fresh sob from the invisible Jack, but he was so much moved himself that he omitted his customary objurgation. He only signed to me to shut the door, and then continued, “What I have decided on is this :—For the present your mother will go back to the South to her brother’s. Jack will remain at Lyons; he has got a small place at the Savings’ Bank. I am going to be traveller for a Wine Company; and as for you, my poor lad, you must earn your own livelihood too. I have just had a letter from the Rector of —, offering you the place of an under-master at a school. Here—read it!”

I took the letter.

“It seems there is no time to lose,” I said as I read it.

“You must set out to-morrow.”

“Very well, I will.”

I folded up the letter, and returned it to my father with a steady hand. You see, I was a philosopher. Just

then my mother came in, timidly followed by Jack. They embraced me silently ; they had known everything the evening before.

“ Get his trunk ready,” said my father abruptly ; “ he goes by to-morrow morning’s boat.”

A deep sigh from mother, another from Jack—that was all ; we were getting used to misfortune.

The morning after that memorable day, the whole family accompanied me to the boat. By a strange coincidence, it was the very same boat which had brought the family to Lyons, eight years ago. There was the captain, there was the cook. We reminded each other of the parrot, the blue umbrella, and other incidents of our landing. These recollections relieved the present gloom a little, and brought the ghost of a smile on my mother’s sad face. The last bell rang ; I tore myself from the embrace of my parents—the only friends I had in the world—and bravely crossed the gangway.

“ Be steady ! ” cried my father. “ Don’t fall ill ! ” said my mother. Jack tried to say something, but could not for crying. I did not weep. I piqued myself on being a philosopher, and felt it incumbent on me to show no sign of weakness.

Yet Heaven knows how I loved those dear ones whom I left behind me in the fog. Heaven knows how gladly I would have given my life's blood for them. But there was something intoxicating in the joy of having left Lyons, in the very motion of the boat, in the pride of being a man, launched into life, free to travel alone and earn my own bread.

All this elated me, and I did not think as often as I ought of the three who were standing sadly on the quay of the Rhone. There was no philosophy in those loving hearts. With fond and anxious eyes they were following the track of the asthmatic boat, and they waved their adieux till the smoke in the distance was no bigger than the wings of a bird.

All this time I was pacing the deck with my hands in my pockets, and my head thrown back, looking as much like a philosopher as I possibly could.

Before we got to Vienne, the cook and his two mates were apprized of the fact that I belonged to the University, and was making my own way very well. I received their compliments with much pride. Once, as I turned in my walk at the bow, I knocked my foot against a coil of rope, just where I had sat eight years

ago with my parrot, imagining myself Robinson Crusoe. I laughed and I blushed when I thought of it. "How absurd I must have looked," thought I, "dragging about that great blue cage with that ridiculous parrot in it!"

Well, with all my wisdom, I did not foresee that all my life long I should be condemned to drag about a cage painted blue, the colour of illusion, and a green parrot, the colour of hope. The only difference is that now the paint has worn off the bars, and the parrot has lost more than half his feathers.

My first care, when I reached my native town, was to wait upon the Rector of the University. He was an old friend of my father's—a fine, handsome old man with a brisk, straightforward manner, in everything the very opposite of a pedant. His reception of me was very kind, though, when I was shown into his study, he could not repress a little gesture of surprise. "Bless me! what a little fellow!" I was indeed very short, I looked younger than I was, and had somewhat the cut of a tomtit.

I was taken aback by this exclamation, and I thought to myself, with a thrill of anxiety, that he would say next that I should not suit.



I suppose he saw what was passing in my mind, for he went on at once, "Come here, my lad! So you are going to be a schoolmaster? At your age, and—ahem!—with your figure, the work will not be quite as easy for you as for others; but' as you must earn your bread, we will do the best we can for you. It will not do to put you into a large school at starting; I will send you to a district school some miles off in the hills, at Sarlande. You will learn your business there; and then, when you have grown taller, and have a beard, we shall see."

While he was talking, he wrote a letter of recommendation for me to the principal of the school at Sarlande, and desired me to lose no time in setting out. He added some kind advice, and dismissed me with a friendly tap, and a promise not to lose sight of me.

With a glad heart, I bounded down the time-worn stairs three steps at a time, and ran breathlessly to secure a place in the diligence for Sarlande.

I found it did not start till the afternoon; I had still four hours to wait. I went first of all to the esplanade to show myself off to my townsfolk; and then I felt it was quite time to get something to eat. I set off to look for a tavern which might suit my slender purse, and just

opposite the barracks I saw a neat, snug little place with a brand-new sign, "Au compagnon du Tour de France." The very thing; and, after a moment's hesitation—remember, reader, it was the first time I ever went into a restaurant—I boldly swung open the door.

The room was empty. The walls were white-washed; there were several oak tables, and in one corner were some walking-sticks, tipped with copper, and adorned with parti-coloured ribbons. In the bar sat a fat man fast asleep over a newspaper. I rapped the table and called "Waiter!" as if I had been well used to such places. The fat man did not awake, but from somewhere in the back appeared the landlady.

The moment she saw her chance customer, she gave a loud cry,—

"Mercy on us, it is Master Daniel!"

"Annou, my good old Annou, is it you?"

Her arms were round my neck in a moment. It was indeed none other than our old Annou, married, mistress of an inn, the motherly hostess of travelling journey-men, and the fat man asleep in the bar was her husband. She was overcome with joy at seeing me, her dear Master Daniel! In the midst of her effusions, the

husband, Jean Peyrol, awoke, and was doubtless a little surprised at the very warm reception his wife was giving to a young stranger ; but when he learnt that I was no less than "one of the young gentlemen" in person, he grew red with pleasure, and was assiduous in his attentions to so illustrious a guest.

"Have you breakfasted, sir?"

"No, indeed! and that was exactly my reason for turning in here."

"Bless my soul! not breakfasted! make haste, look sharp!"

And Annou ran off to her kitchen, while Peyrol hastened to the cellar—a first-rate one, according to the frequenters of his hostelry. In a trice the cloth was laid and spread with a meal. I had only to sit down and fall to. Annou, on one side, cut tempting slices of bread and butter to eat with the new-laid eggs, as white as snow and full of milk ; Peyrol, on the other side, poured out a bumper of old Burgundy, which sparkled like rubies in my glass. I was as happy as a king. I drank off the wine without adding a drop of water, as if I was accustomed to it, ate for four, and between the mouthfuls found time to tell that I belonged to the University,



Peyrol poured out a bumper of old Burgundy.



which enabled me to earn my bread honourably. I said these words with an air of the utmost importance.

Annou was all in a twitter of admiration.

Peyrol was not quite so enthusiastic ; he thought it only natural that I should earn my bread if I could. At my age he had been on the world for four or five years, doing for himself, and not costing his parents a halfpenny—quite the other way. Yes, indeed ! when he was Master Daniel's age, he had been a man for ever so long !

Not that the worthy landlord ventured to make these remarks out loud. What would Annou have said to drawing comparisons between Jean Peyrol and Master Daniel Eyssette ?

Meantime I talked and ate, and drank and talked : I felt my cheeks glowing. I called for glasses that we might drink healths. Peyrol brought the glasses, and we drank M. Eyssette's health, then Madame Eyssette's, then Jack's and mine, then Annou and her husband's. We toasted the University, the parrot. Two hours slipped away in this chatting and drinking of toasts. We talked of the dark past and the bright future ; of the old mill, and of the poor Abbé who was so beloved by every one.

At last I got up to go away, in spite of Annou's disappointed "So soon!" What a pity, when there were so many things still to tell and to hear! But, to be sure, since Master Daniel said he had something very particular to do, she and Peyrol would not keep him; and so, with many a "God bless you! God be with the dear young gentleman!" Peyrol and his wife saw me to the street.

Shall I tell you the very particular thing I had to do?

I wanted to see the mill again—the place I had been so fond of; the factory, the garden, the oleanders, the tall plane-trees, and the pomegranates in flower—all the delights of my childhood. We are all alike in this clinging to what we loved long ago, even to the very stones, even to a silk-mill. As I approached the tall plane-trees, whose feathery heads rose high above the houses, they seemed to wave their branches in token of recognition of the old friend who was hurrying towards them, as if they whispered, "Daniel Eyssette has come back." I hastened on, but when I reached the building I stood petrified with amazement. I saw nothing but high, unbroken, grey walls, over which not an oleander, not a pomegranate could be seen. The windows were all

gone ; a chapel stood where the work-rooms had been, and over the door was a cross of red freestone, with some Latin words beneath it.

O misery ! the factory was turned into a convent of Carmelite nuns, where no man might put his foot. You see, it is not always an advantage to be a man.







## CHAPTER V.

### EARN YOUR LIVING.

SARLANDE is a small town in the Cevennes, lying in the bottom of a narrow valley, the hills rising like a wall all round it. In sunshine it is an oven, and when the wind blows from the mountains it is an ice-house. The evening I arrived, the cold wind had been blowing all day, and, although it was spring-time, the cold, as I drove into the town on the top of the coach, pierced me to the bone. The streets were dark and deserted. A few

people were lounging about, waiting for the coach as it drew up before the dimly-lighted office. I climbed down from my perch, and asked the way at once to the college; I wanted to begin my work without a moment's delay.

The college was not far from the Place d'Armes, where we had stopped. The man who carried my portmanteau led me through two or three silent streets, and stopped at a large building, which looked as if everything about it had been dead for years. "Here we are," said he, lifting the great ponderous knocker, which gave a heavy, hollow sound; the door opened of itself, and we went in. All was dark. The man put my portmanteau down on the floor; I paid him, and he hurried away. The great door closed heavily after him. In a few minutes a sleepy porter made his appearance, carrying a lantern in his hand.

"A new pupil?" said he, with a drowsy air. He took me for a pupil! I drew myself up, and said,—

"I am not a pupil at all. Show me in to the principal."

The porter stared, and then asked me to wait a moment in his lodge. The principal was in chapel with

the boys, and as soon as that was over I should be shown to his rooms. Supper was just over in the lodge. A gay young fellow, with a straw-coloured moustache, was sipping a glass of brandy ; beside him was a little, thin, sickly-looking woman, as yellow as a Seville orange, muffled up to the ears in a faded shawl.

"What now, M. Cassagne ?" asked the moustachioed man, looking at me over his glass of brandy.

"The new usher," replied the porter ; "but the gentleman is so small that I mistook him for a pupil."

"Sure enough, we have pupils taller and older than the gentleman—Veillon major for instance."

"And Crouzet," said the porter.

"And Soubeyrol," added the woman.

Thereupon they began to converse in a low voice, sipping their brandy, with a side-glance at me. I heard the wind whistling outside, mingled with the shrill voices of the boys reciting the evening litany. Then a bell rang, and there was a pattering of feet in the hall outside.

"Chapel is over," said the porter, getting up. "Will you come now, sir ?"

He took his lantern, and I followed him.

The college seemed an immense place, with its endless corridors, its high vaulted arches, its wide staircases, with balustrades of wrought iron, all old, and black, and smoke-stained. The porter told me that, previous to '89, it had been a naval college, and had had eight hundred cadets, all of noble families.

He was still proudly giving me this information, when we reached the apartments of the principal. He gently pushed open a pair of double doors and a thick curtain, and knocked twice on the wainscot. A voice answered, "Come in !"

We entered accordingly, and I found myself in a very large study, hung with green tapestry. At the far end was the principal, seated at a long table, writing by the dim light of a lamp covered with a shade.

The porter pushed me before him.

"Please, sir, the new master who is to be in M. Serrière's place," said he.

"Very well," said the principal, without stirring.

The porter made his bow, and went out. I stood still in the middle of the room, twirling my hat between my thumbs.

When the principal had finished writing, he turned

towards me, and I could then see his small, meagre face, with its cold, colourless eyes. He raised the shade of the lamp, and put a spy-glass to his eye.

"Why, he is a boy!" cried he, twisting himself in his armchair. "What do they send me a boy for?"

"What-d'ye-call'em" came to my mind. "It is all up with me," thought I; "the next word will be, 'There's the door!'"

With great difficulty I faltered out a word or two, and presented the letter of recommendation from the Rector.

The principal took it, read it, and folded it up; opened it again, and re-read it. At length he said that, in consequence of the very high character given of my family by the Rector, he would consent to try me, although my extreme youth made him almost afraid to do so. He then began a long lecture on the importance of the duties I was undertaking, of which I did not hear one word. The one thought that I was not rejected filled my mind. I was so happy that I could have kissed the principal's hands a thousand times.

A loud clank of iron brought me to myself. I started, looked round, and beheld a tall personage, with large

red whiskers, who had entered noiselessly. It was the superintendent-general. He stood there, with his head on one side, looking at me with the blindest smile. From his first finger hung a bunch of keys of all sizes. His smile might have prepossessed me in his favour, but there was a jailor-like rattle about those keys which gave me a shudder.

"M. Viot," said the principal, "this is the gentleman who is to replace M. Serrières."

M. Viot bowed, and gave me one of his sweetest smiles, but a sort of ironical shake of his keys seemed to say, "That little fellow to come after M. Serrières! Come, that's not bad!"

It seemed as if the principal understood the keys, for he added with a sigh, "I know that we have an irreparable loss in M. Serrières" (an actual groan from the keys); "but I am sure, M. Viot, that if you will take the new master under your special care, and give him the benefit of your ideas on the method of teaching, the discipline of the house will not suffer from M. Serrière's departure."

M. Viot replied, with an insinuating smile, that everything in his power was mine already; but the keys

gave an angry rattle, as if to say, "You had better mind yourself, you little monkey, or—"

"M. Eyssette," continued the principal, "you may retire. For this night you must sleep at the hotel. Be here at eight to-morrow ; I think that is all." And he bowed with a dignified air.

M. Viot, smiling more blandly than ever, accompanied me to the door, and slipped into my hand a little book. "The Rule of the House," said he ; "study it well." Then he opened the door for me, and shut it with a terrific twirl of the keys.

I found myself in absolute darkness. I groped my way along the corridors, feeling the walls to find an exit. A faint moonbeam stole presently through the grating of a window at some distance high up in the wall, and helped me a little. Suddenly I saw a bright spot of light coming towards me out of a dark gallery ; it grew larger rapidly, came close to me, passed me, went on, and finally disappeared. It was like a vision, but, brief as it was, I took in all the minutest details of the apparition. I beheld two shadowy forms ; one, that of a wrinkled old woman bent double, with enormous spectacles, which covered

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half her face ; the other was a girl of twelve or thirteen, slight and unsubstantial as a ghost, but with a great pair of very unghostlike jet-black eyes. The old woman carried a brass lamp in her hand, the eyes carried nothing. They passed close to me, but without seeing me ; and after they had disappeared I stood still in the same spot for ever so long. At last I began to feel my way onwards, but my heart was beating ; I seemed still to see the apparition of the horrible old fairy in spectacles beside the black eyes. However, it was absolutely necessary to make my way out and find somewhere to spend the night. It was beginning to be serious, but luckily my difficulties were ended by the appearance of the man with the moustachios, who at once offered to show me the way to a little inn, not too dear, where I should be served like a king. I gladly accepted his offer, and we went along together. He seemed to be a very good fellow ; on the way he told me his name was Roger, that he was professor of dancing, fencing, and gymnastics to the College of Sarlande, and that he had served for many years in the Chasseurs d'Afrique. Very young men have a natural liking for soldiers, and this last item was enough to win



me entirely. We parted at the inn door with a hearty shake of the hand and warm promises of friendship.

Must I confess that, left alone in the cold bedroom to which I was presently shown, as I looked at the uninviting bed, my heart swelled, my philosophy broke down, and I cried like a child? I felt so utterly insignificant and so desolate. Then there rose on my mind the recollection of my scattered family—my father in one place, my mother in another, the home gone. Then and there I formed a grand resolution. I vowed to raise up the family of Eyssette once more, and to make a home for it by my own exertions. I forgot my troubles, and with all the pride of a man I set about the work of my life. I took up M. Viot's book and began to study my new duties.

The book was in manuscript. It had been a labour of love to its author to copy it with his own hand. It was divided into three sections :—

1. Duties of the master to his superiors.
2. Duties of the master to his colleagues.
3. Duties of the master to the pupils.

Nothing was omitted, everything was provided for, to the smallest detail, even to the accident of breaking a

pane of glass, or the angle at which the master's hands were to be raised in class. The salary of the masters was recounted with exactness, and so was the half-bottle of wine which was their allowance at meals. The book wound up with a grandiloquent passage about the excellence of the rules ; but with all my respect for the work of M. Viot, I could not get to the end of the panegyric ; I fell fast asleep in the midst.

That night I slept badly ; my sleep was disturbed by fantastic dreams. I dreamt of the rattling of those keys ; then I dreamt that I saw the old fairy in spectacles sitting at the bedside, and I woke with a start. I fell asleep to dream of the eyes so black and so child-like, which seemed to come to the foot of my bed and gaze at me compassionately.

Eight o'clock next morning saw me at the college. M. Viot was standing at the door, watching the arrival of the day boys ; he greeted me with one of his sweetest smiles. "Wait in the entry," said he ; "as soon as the boys have all gone in, I will present you to your colleagues."

I walked up and down in the entry, bowing profoundly to each of the professors as they came up out of breath.

Only one among these gentlemen returned my bow ; he was a priest, and was professor of philosophy. "An original," said M. Viot. I took a fancy to that original on the spot.

A bell rang, the school was now full. Four or five tall young men came hastily into the vestibule, and stopped short when they saw M. Viot.

"Gentlemen," said the superintendent, "this is M. Daniel Eyssette, your new colleague ;" then he made a profound bow and withdrew, with his eternal smile, his head inclined on one side, and a fresh rattle of his keys. My colleagues and I looked at one another for a moment in silence ; then the tallest and stoutest of them spoke. (This I learnt was the renowned M. Serrières, whose place I was to fill.)

"By Jove !" said he in a jolly tone, "it is a case of the old saying, one master follows another without resembling him." At this allusion to the prodigious difference between our sizes, there was a general laugh. I was the first to laugh myself, but I would have given a great deal (if I had had anything to give) to be a few inches taller. "But it does not signify," said Serrières, holding out his hand to me ; "it is not necessary to come

up to the same standard in order to do the same work." Then taking me unceremoniously by the arm, he said, "You have an hour to yourself ; come with us, young gentleman ; I am going to give a farewell glass to your future colleagues. Join us, and you will become acquainted with them."

My new friend led me to the Café Barbette on the Place d'Armes. It was frequented by the subalterns of the garrison, and the first thing that caught my eye was a number of shakos and sword-belts hung about everywhere. There was a general muster on account of the departure of Serrières, and his farewell party. The subalterns, to whom I was now presented, met me with much cordiality. Truth to say, however, my arrival did not create much sensation. I was soon forgotten in the corner to which I crept timidly. But, while the glasses were being filled, the great M. Serrières came and sat down by me.

"You are lucky," he said, "in having pitched upon Sarlande to make your beginning ; you will have the lowest form, little urchins who are ruled with the rod. The principal is not a bad sort of man, your colleagues are good fellows, and if it was not for M. Viot and the old woman—"

"What old woman?" said I, with a shudder.

"Oh, you will know her soon enough. At all hours of the day or night she is to be met with, prying about the college with an enormous pair of spectacles. She is an aunt of the principal, and it is her business to look after the housekeeping. If we are not starved, it is not her fault."

By his description I recognized, without difficulty, the old fairy of the spectacles.

The glasses were now filled, and the punch went round. It was the first time I had ever tasted punch. By degrees my shyness disappeared; I came out of my corner and walked across the room, assuming an easy air—heaven only knows how, for I was far from feeling at ease, or what vainglorious nonsense I talked to make the subalterns so affable all at once. I talked of my wealthy family, of my views of taking a high place in the educational department, for which I was preparing myself by taking a mastership for the present; for, of course, with my prospects I had no intention of staying long at a country school—and so on.

Oh, if the professors at Lyons had heard What-d'ye-call'em hold forth!

What more I said under the influence of the punch I don't know, but, just before we broke up, the last touch was put to my vanity when M. Roger, my friend of the evening before, proposed the health of M. Daniel Eyssette. After this we rose, for it wanted only a quarter to ten, which was the hour for being in college.

The man with the keys was waiting for us.

"M. Serrières," said he to my tall companion, whose gait was, I thought, a little unsteady from the punch, "you will now take your class for the last time, and the principal and I will come directly to instal the new master."

Accordingly, in a few minutes, the principal, M. Viot, and I as new master, made our solemn entry into the classroom. Every one stood up. The principal, with a few kind words, introduced me to my pupils; his little address was very dignified; then he and Serrières withdrew. M. Viot stayed the last; he said nothing, but his keys jangled and clanked so horribly that all the small heads went down behind the desks, and the new master himself felt his equanimity not a little disturbed. When the terrible keys had retreated, a whole range of faces peered over the desks, and many pairs of eyes, bright, mocking,

merry, malicious or scared, were all staring at me, while a long whisper passed from table to table. I felt disconcerted for a moment, but, slowly mounting the steps of my high desk, I endeavoured to look stern, and raising my voice, and giving two sharp knocks on the table, I said, "To work, gentlemen ! to work !"

My work was begun.

They were not a bad set, these little fellows ; I had to do with bad ones afterwards, but these gave me no trouble, and I liked them for the simple souls that looked through their childish eyes.

I never punished them. I should as soon have thought of punishing birds. If they chirped too loud, I had only to cry "Silence !" and my aviary was silent, at least for the space of five minutes. The oldest boy of the form was only eleven ; and yet this was the form which Serrières boasted he could rule with the rod. I did not govern with a rod, I tried kindness. Sometimes, when they had done very well, I told them a story.

"A story !"—this was the signal for shutting-up books, and thrusting ink-bottles, pens, and rulers bodily into the desks, and then, with elbows on the table, they listened with all their ears.

I had composed a few little fairy-tales for them, such as "The adventures of a grasshopper," "The misfortunes of a rabbit," &c. Then, as now, my dear old La Fontaine was the patron saint of my reading, and in all my little stories I only enlarged upon his fables with a little addition from my own life. There was a poor cricket who had to earn his livelihood like What-d'ye-call'em, and a ladybird who had to make portfolios, crying all the time like Jack. It amused my pupils and it amused me; but unfortunately M. Viot had no notion of our amusing ourselves in this fashion. Three or four times a week the man and the keys used to make a tour of inspection all through the college, to see whether everything was going on according to rule. One day he entered our class-room just as I had got to the most touching part of the story of the rabbit. The whole room trembled at his sight. The boys looked scared, and the narrator stopped short in the act of holding up his hand in the attitude of the rabbit's foot.

M. Viot stood before my high seat, smiling as usual, but casting a look of amazement down the empty desks. He said nothing, but his keys clashed, and we understood.



"So, you rogues, no work going on here!"

Tremblingly I attempted to appease the terrible keys. I stammered out, "These young gentlemen have worked very well, and I was telling them a story to reward their diligence."

No reply; but a smile, a bow, and a final growl from the keys as M. Viot left the room.

When afternoon playtime came, he accosted me, and with a smile but without a word he placed in my hand the book of rules, open at the twelfth page, "Duties of the masters to the pupils." I understood that I was to tell no more stories, and I obeyed.

For some days the boys were inconsolable; they wanted to hear the end of the rabbit, and I wanted to tell it to them. I really loved my little urchins. We were always together, for the college consisted of three separate divisions—the upper, the middle, and the lower schools—and each had its own playground, dormitory, and class-room. My thirty-five little fellows thus really belonged to me as if I was their parent.

I had not a friend except my boys. It was all very well for M. Viot to smile, to take my arm when we met

in the hour for recreation, and to give me pieces of advice about the rules. I did not and could not like him ; I was too much afraid of his keys. The principal I never saw ; as for the professors, they scarcely deigned to look at me as they passed.

I must own to a failing in my character ; I am over-sensitive, and sometimes take offence from people who are not thinking about me at all. But, with regard to my colleagues, I believe that the sort of interest which the superintendent seemed to take in me had set them all against me ; and, besides, I had declined to go again to the Café Barbette, and that was unpardonable.

Even the porter and the fencing-master held aloof from me ; the latter especially appeared to have taken umbrage at something or other. Whenever I passed him, he used to twirl his moustache and show the whites of his eyes as fiercely as if he was going to put a score of Arabs to the sword.

On one occasion I heard him say out loud to the porter that he did not love spies. He looked at me as he spoke, and I saw from the porter's look that he fully agreed with him, though he said nothing.

What spies were they talking of? This set me thinking.

Disliked on all sides, I was forced to take my own line, and I took it decidedly. The master of the middle school and I shared a small room on the third floor, high up in the roof. I spent my spare time there. As my chum never came there by day, it was virtually my own room, my home. I used to lock myself in, and then, dragging my box (there were no chairs in the room) over to the old bureau, which was covered with ink-stains and hacked with penknives, I spread out my books, and worked away.

It was springtime. When I looked up I saw the blue sky and the old trees in the courtyard already covered with foliage. Out of doors all was still. Now and then there would reach me some angry exclamation from a master, the monotonous recitation of a lesson, or a quarrel among the sparrows in the trees; then all was silent again, and the college seemed asleep. But I was wide awake; I did not even indulge in the seductive day-dreams which are sweeter than sleep. I worked incessantly, cramming my head with Greek and Latin till my brain seemed ready to burst. Sometimes, in the

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very thick of my dry work, I was aware of a mysterious whisper at my heart. "Who is there?" "It is I, your old friend, the Muse of the red book. Let me in, little What-d'ye-call'em." No, no! no more of the red book. What I had to do now was to write Greek compositions, to take my diploma, to get a professorship, and to make a new home for my family as soon as possible.

The thought that I was working for them inspired me with courage. Even my room was brightened by it.

How I loved that dear shabby garret! how I enjoyed the hours I passed there hard at work! How brave I felt! Out upon it! why could I not always be what I was then?

On the whole, then, I was not without some happy hours. Sometimes I was anything but happy. Twice a week, on Thursdays and Sundays, I had to take the boys out for a walk; this walk was martyrdom to me. We generally went about a mile out of the town to a sort of meadow at the foot of the hills. Some magnificent Spanish chestnut-trees, a couple of ginger-beer shops painted bright yellow, and a sparkling little rivulet

dancing over the greensward, gave a cheerful aspect to the spot.

It was the custom to march the three divisions separately to the place, and on reaching it they were permitted to mingle together under the charge of one master. This always fell to my lot, and a pretty business it was to keep an eye on them all ! It would have been delightful to stretch oneself on the fine turf, under the shade of the chestnuts, to listen to the song of the rivulet, while the perfume of the wild thyme stole over one's senses ; but instead of that I had to watch, to shout, to punish. I had the whole school on my hands, and it was hard work enough. Worse still was the task of crossing the town with the lowest division.

The lads in the other divisions kept step admirably, and stamped their feet like old campaigners. But my little youngsters knew nothing about drill ; they would not keep their ranks ; they straggled along hand in hand. In vain I cried "Keep step !" they did not even know what I meant. The head of my column was tolerably orderly. I placed there the steadiest, the tallest, the best dressed ; but the rear was disorder itself. I scarcely dared to look at the brats, with their

hair all rumpled, their ink-stained hands, and torn trowsers.

“*Desinit in piscem*,” remarked M. Viot, who had his joke sometimes ; but indeed I was ashamed of the figure we cut, and it is no wonder I was in despair at showing myself in the streets of Sarlande in such a plight, especially on Sundays, when the streets were crowded with people. The chimes were ringing, and at every step we met young ladies of a boarding-school going to vespers, and gaily-dressed ladies, and dandies in light grey trowsers. I had to encounter all this as I went along in my threadbare coat, at the head of my ragged regiment. When shyness has pride at the root, it is apt to fancy that all eyes are turned on itself. Of course no one gave me a thought, but in my morbid self-consciousness I thought of nothing else. I was miserable about my insignificant figure and my shabby coat. What a fool I was, and how surely does such folly lead to wrong !

There was one especially among this crew of little imps who used to drive me wild by his uncouthness. He always looked as if he had been picked out of the gutter ; his ugliness and untidiness made him a perfect

object, and to crown all, he was very lame. I am ashamed to say that, instead of pitying him, I was simply ashamed of him ; I could not bear the sight of him, and when I saw him waddling along at the end of the column with the grace of a young gosling, I would have given anything to be able to order him back to the college ; he was a disgrace to us. We used to call him the Crab, from his awkward sidelong shuffle.

His family was anything but aristocratic ; all the little street-boys were his intimate friends ; whenever we went through the town we had a mob of little rascals at our heels, turning catherine-wheels, calling him by his name, pelting him with chestnut husks, and playing every kind of monkey tricks. All this was most amusing to my youngsters, but it was no joke to me, and regularly every week I addressed to the principal a circumstantial report on the conduct of the pupil B—, and the disorders entailed by his presence with us.

Unhappily, my reports were unnoticed, and I was still obliged to endure the Crab's company.

One Sunday—it happened to be a great holiday, and a day of brilliant sunshine—he came, at the hour for our

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walk, in a state that was really outrageous ; his hands were black, his shoes without strings, his clothes torn ; there was mud even on his hair. The absurd thing was that he had evidently been turned out with much care ; his hair, which was generally ill-brushed, was stiff with pomatum, and it was evident that a mother's hand had tied his cravat. Alas ! there was many a gutter between his house and the college, and the wretch had managed to get into every one of them. When I saw him calmly take his place among the rest with a smile, as if nothing was amiss, I could not contain myself for indignation. "Get out of that !" I cried. He thought I was joking, and continued to smile ; he thought himself quite grand that day. I cried again, "Get out of that, I say !" Then he looked at me with an air at once piteous, submissive, and imploring ; but I was inexorable, and we set off, leaving him alone in the middle of the street. I thought I had got rid of him for the day, but when we got to the end of the town, the laughing and hooting in our rear made me look round. The Crab was gravely following us a few paces behind. I was hard-hearted enough to desire the boys who headed the column to step out. They caught my meaning, and all set off at



double-quick time. Now and then they looked round to see if the Crab was keeping up, and laughed to see the little imp, looking no bigger than one's fist in the distance, but following as steadily as grim care, wriggling along in the dusty high road, among the sellers of lemonade and cakes. The wretch arrived at the meadows almost as soon as we did: he was white with fatigue, and his limb dragged painfully.

My heart smote me, and, ashamed—none too soon—of my cruelty, I called to him in a gentle voice. He was dressed in a faded old blouse, with a red and white check pattern, just like that blouse I wore at Lyons! I remembered it well, and I said to myself, "You may well blush for yourself; that child whom you have been tormenting is just yourself over again." And, full of remorse, I began to love the poor outcast. He had sat down on the ground, from the pain of his leg. I sat down beside him, and gave him an orange, and talked to him. I felt as if I could have washed his feet. Would it not have been better if such had been my feeling from the first? However, better late than never; I repented at last. From that day I became a friend to the boy, and I learnt some touching things about him.



I sat down beside him, and gave him an orange.

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He was the son of a blacksmith, who, having a great idea of the value of education, pinched himself at every corner to send his son as a half-boarder to the college ; but, alas ! the boy was not made for school, and learnt nothing there.

The day he began he was given a copy and told to make strokes, and for a whole year he had been scrawling these straggling, crooked strokes. No one took any notice of him. He did not belong to any particular class ; generally he sat among any class that was going on. One day he was found scrawling away at his strokes in the middle of the lesson of philosophy. A queer sort of pupil in truth was the Crab ! But where is the school in which there is not one such pariah, the innocent victim of misfortune ? I used to watch him in school, bent double over his paper, labouring away at his strokes, panting with his tongue out, clutching his pen, and leaning on his pen with all his might. After each stroke he took fresh ink ; when he got to the end of a line, in went his tongue, and he rested himself for a minute or so, rubbing his hands. He worked with more heart now that he and I were friends. When he had finished a page, he would clamber up the steps of my *estrade* on

all fours, and lay his masterpiece before me without speaking. I generally gave him a kindly pat, and said, "Very well done," for I did not want to discourage him. His strokes were actually improving, his pen spluttered less, and there was a little less ink on his copy-book. I think I should have made something of him at last, but our fates separated us. I was not to be allowed to repair my wrongs toward him.

The master of the middle form was leaving the college, and as the end of the half was at hand, the principal would not engage a fresh master. I was promoted to the charge of the middle school, and a rhetorician with a beard was put in my place in the lower. I looked on this arrangement with some apprehension. I had seen a good deal of my new pupils in the meadows, and I did not like the idea of being always with them. Besides, I had grown fond of my little fellows whom I was to leave. How would they get on with the rhetorician? and what would become of the Crab? They, too, were sorry to lose me; when the bell rang after our last lesson together, we were almost upset. Some of them made me quite affecting little speeches. The Crab said nothing, but when I was leaving the room, he came up

to me, and with many blushes gravely put into my hand a grand page of strokes which he had executed for my express benefit.

He was not a bad little fellow after all.





## CHAPTER VI.

### THE MIDDLE SCHOOL.

I WAS settled in the class-room of the middle school. My division consisted of about fifty chubby boys from the hills, the sons of well-to-do farmers, who sent them to college that they might get a little polish at the rate of a hundred and twenty francs a quarter.

They were a rough lot, arrogant, and coarse in manners, and they had the unpleasant type peculiar to boys of twelve or fourteen ; their great hands were

covered with chilblains ; their voices sounded like the voice of a young cock with a sore throat ; they had a saucy, almost insolent look. They detested me without waiting to know me. I had not the stature and the look of strength necessary to procure respect or awe in these rough natures. I was, in their eyes, an enemy whom they might hope to conquer. I represented authority without power. I was an insignificant subaltern—a pawn on the board, so to speak, and the smallest of all pawns. From the moment I took my chair among them, it was war to the knife without truce or mercy. What those cruel boys made me suffer ! It is long ago now, and I try to speak without bitterness, but I cannot ; for at this moment when I am writing, my hand trembles at the thought of all I went through. It seems like yesterday.

They have no doubt forgotten ; they have forgotten their insignificant little master and the fine eye-glass he bought to make himself a little more imposing. My former pupils are men now—grave, busy men. Soubeyrol is an attorney somewhere in the Cevennes ; Veillon minor a clerk in the courts ; Loupi is a chemist, and Bosanquet a vet. They are all settled, and have a competence and



a position. Perhaps sometimes when they meet at their club or in the square before the church, and are talking over the merry old days at school, they may chance to speak of me.

"I say, Veillon, do you recollect that little Eyssette—that little bit of a whey-faced fellow with long hair? What tricks we used to play him!"

True enough, gentlemen, you did play him tricks, and he has not forgotten them. I wonder whether you remember how you made him weep, and how that made it all the richer sport for you? Do you know how many times, after a day of torment, the poor devil, cowering in his bed, stuffed his blanket into his mouth lest you should hear him sob?

I had thought life at my father's house wretched enough. But I had my mother, my father, and my brother even there. There was affection there at least, and if each day did bring its troubles, we helped each other to bear them and feel them less. But in my present situation what had I to turn to? With what longing, in the desolate nights, I thought of our shattered home! No, one cannot so easily make up one's mind to live in an atmosphere of malevolence; it is dreadful to live in a

state of terror ; to be always on one's guard ; to have to punish perpetually, and sometimes to be unjust without meaning to be so ; to have perpetual suspicion forced on one ; to see traps laid for one on all sides ; to know no peace at meals, or waking or sleeping ; to be for ever saying, " What will they do to me next ? " If I were to live to a hundred, I never, never could forget all I suffered at the college of Sarlande from the day I set foot in the middle school.

To be candid, however, I had gained one thing by the change. You recollect the apparition of the black-eyed child in the dark corridor the night of my arrival ? In my new position I saw her pleasant face occasionally. Twice a day, at the hour of recreation, I used to see her working at a window on the first floor which looked out on the playground of the middle school. There were her eyes, larger and blacker than ever, fixed from morning to night on some interminable sewing ; it was the one business of her eyes. The malevolent old fairy of the spectacles had got her from the foundling hospital for the sole purpose of sewing. The poor child had never known either father or mother, and from year's end to year's end she did nothing but sew without relaxation,

under the remorseless eye of the old lady of the spectacles, who sat beside her spinning. I felt that I had a companion in misery ; I used to watch her, and the hour of recreation seemed all too short.

The child knew that I was there ; now and then the black eyes looked up from the sewing, and we conversed without the aid of words.

"You look very unhappy," said the speaking eyes.

"So do you, poor little one !"

"I have neither father nor mother."

"And mine are far away."

"If you knew how dreadful the spectacles at my side are !"

"If I could tell you what I suffer from those boys !"

"Courage, M. Eyssette !"

"Courage, kind black eyes !"

We could not talk at greater length. I had always the fear of M. Viot and his clanking keys before my eyes, and up in the window the great spectacles with steel rims were a M. Viot for the black eyes ; so after a rapid dialogue, which lasted for a second or so, they went back to the seam. Those kind, black eyes seemed

to tell me of a brave little sister sent by heaven's goodness to cheer me.

I now, too, became acquainted with the Abbé Germane, whom I liked very much. He was our professor of philosophy. He was considered an oddity, and even the principal and M. Viot stood in awe of him. He spoke seldom, and always dryly and with brevity, no matter whom he was addressing. He carried his head far back, and went along with his cassock tucked up, showing his buckled shoes tramping noisily with a long stride. He was tall and strongly built.

I thought for some time that he was a remarkably handsome man, but when I saw him near, I perceived that his noble, lion-like countenance was terribly marked with the small-pox ; yet, seamed and scarred as it was, I liked that energetic head ; beneath its strength I could read goodness. He lived by himself in a little room at the far end of the house, in the part which was called the Old College. No one ever entered his room except his two brothers, a couple of scapegraces in my division, for whom he paid. At night, when we crossed the courts on our way to the dormitories, we used to see, at the top of the dark, ruinous old building, the glimmer of

a pale light ; it was the Abbé's lamp. Many a time, too, in the early morning, as I went down for the six o'clock study, have I seen the lamp burning still ; the Abbé had not been in bed all night. He was said to be writing a great work on philosophy.

Even before I knew him, I felt a strong sympathy for the strange man. I was attracted by his fine face, which, marred though it was, glowed with intellect ; but I had heard so much of his oddity that I was afraid to make any advances to him. Happily for myself, however, I did at last go to him, and in this wise. You must know that I was up to the eyes in the history of philosophy—an arduous study for one of my calibre. It happened that I wanted to read Condillac. Between ourselves, he is not worth reading. His philosophy is a farce, and you might put all the sense it contains into a twopenny locket as big as your nail. But you know, as long as we are young, we look at things in a way of our own, and we must explore everything, whether it is worth it or not. So I wanted to read Condillac. A Condillac I must have by hook or by crook. Unfortunately there was not a copy in the college library, and the book-sellers of Sarlande did not keep such an article.





“What do you want?”

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I resolved to apply to the Abbé Germane. His brothers had told me that his library contained above two thousand volumes, and I made no doubt that the book I considered so indispensable would be among them. Still, I was so much in awe of the Abbé, that nothing short of the urgent desire I had to get hold of Condillac could have driven me to take this step.

When I reached his door, my legs shook with fright. I knocked twice very gently.

"Come in !" said a voice like a Titan's. The redoubtable Abbé was seated on a low chair, his cassock was tucked up, leaving visible through his black silk stockings the large muscles of his outstretched legs. He was reading a folio with red edges.

"Ho ! it is you, is it ? How are you ? What do you want ?"

The sharp, decided tones of his voice, the severe look of the room completely lined with books, his very attitude, all made me feel still more shy ; but I managed to get out that the object of my visit was to borrow a Condillac.

"Condillac ?" said he with a smile ; "so you want to



read Condillac? What put that in your head? But if it cannot do you any good, I don't see any harm that it can do you, my lad. There, take your Condillac; it is on the third shelf to the left. I lend it to you, only mind you don't spoil it, or I will crop your ears."

I got down the Condillac and was going out, when the Abbé called me back.

"So you are studying philosophy?" said he, looking at me keenly. "Oh me! what strange ways men sometimes take to earn their bread! You know something about that, I think. No, don't blush; I know that yours is not a happy lot, my poor little fellow, and I know that the boys lead you a hard life."

He paused a moment; something seemed to touch him sharply; he gave an angry shove to the table. I was much moved at seeing the worthy man so compassionate towards my hard lot, and I put the great book up to my face to hide my emotion. He went on after a moment,—

"By-the-bye, I was forgetting to ask you—do you love God? You must love Him, my dear boy, and you must put your trust in Him, and pray to Him with all your heart, or else you will never be able to get on. In

all the sorrows of life I know only two remedies—prayer and work. Don't forget that! Philosophers are nothing by themselves; there is no philosophy if you leave out God. Remember that! I have studied it to the very bottom. I have gone through all that, you may believe me."

"I do believe you, sir," said I.

"Now go! That's enough; when you want books, you have only to come for them; the key of my room is always over the door, and the philosophers live on the third shelf. Now no more. Farewell!"

And he settled himself again to his book, and let me go out without even a look. He was an original if ever there was one. Thenceforward I had free access to all the philosophical writers of the universe. I went into the Abbé's room without knocking, just as if it was my own. In general, when I went there, the Abbé was in the lecture-room; his room was empty, but the red-edged folios which strewed the table, and the innumerable papers covered with minute writing, gave it an air of life. Sometimes the Abbé was there reading, writing, or pacing the room with long strides. I used to say as I went

in, "Good morning, sir ;" but generally he did not notice me. I took down my book and went out without more. I suppose we did not exchange twenty words from that time to the end of the half ; but I did not care, for something made me feel that we were friends.

Meanwhile the vacation was fast approaching. All day long the pupils who learnt music were to be heard practising polkas and marches against the day of the distribution of prizes. These polkas made everybody lively. After evening school, a number of little almanacs were produced, and each boy marked off the day which had just ended, "One day less !" The courtyards were full of planks for the platform ; armchairs were dusted, carpets were beaten. Discipline and work were at an end ; but to the last the tricks played by the boys to persecute me never ceased.

At length the great day arrived ; not too soon, for I really could bear no more. The prizes were delivered in the courtyard belonging to the middle school. I think I can still see the gay striped tent, the walls hung with white calico, the tall trees covered with flags, and beneath them a crowd of hats, helmets, caps with flowers

in them, bonnets, feathers, ribbons—all sorts of finery. At the far end was a platform where the heads of the college were seated in crimson velvet armchairs. How small we felt before this platform! How haughty and magnificent its occupants looked! Not one of them wore his ordinary physiognomy; not one, except the Abbé. He was on the platform, but he did not seem aware of it. Reclining in his armchair, his head thrown back, he appeared absorbed in his own meditations, and his look seemed to follow his thoughts far away above the present scene.

Stationed at the foot of the platform was the band, the trombones and the ophicleides glittering in the sunshine; then came the three divisions of the school, closely packed on benches with the masters; and behind them were the parents under the charge of the master of the fifth form, whose voice was heard calling out, "Make way for a lady! make a little room there!" Finally, lost among the crowd, were heard the eternal keys, to the right, to the left, everywhere!

The ceremony began. It was a hot day, not a breath

of air in the tent. Everything looked red—faces, carpets, flags, armchairs; ladies with flushed cheeks were growing drowsy under their marabout feathers; bald-headed gentlemen were mopping their faces with red silk handkerchiefs.

There were three speeches, all very much applauded, but I scarcely heard a word of them. Up in the first-floor window I spied the black eyes of my little adopted sister fixed on her sewing. Poor eyes! whom the malignant fairy of the spectacles would never allow to cease working. Was there never to be a holiday for them?

When all the names of those honoured by a prize had been given out to the very last, the band struck up a triumphal march, and everybody rose. The professors came down from the platform, the scholars clambered over the benches to join their friends. On all sides there were embraces, and cries of "This way, this way!" The sisters of the laureates went off proudly carrying their brothers' wreaths; silk dresses rustled as they made their way among the lines of chairs. I stood moping, half-hidden behind a tree, watching the gay ladies as they passed, and feeling ashamed of my thread-

bare coat. The courtyard gradually emptied. At the great door stood the principal and M. Viot, greeting the parents, bidding farewell to the boys. "Good-bye till next year!" said the principal with a gracious smile. The keys rattled out a caress, "Come back, come back to us, my dears, next year!"

The boys hurried past carelessly, and cleared the steps with one bound. Some got into grand carriages emblazoned with coats of arms and crests, where their mothers and sisters were settling the voluminous skirts of their dresses to make room. "Home!" Off we go to the old country-house. Away to our parks, our gardens, to the swing under the acacias, the aviaries full of rare birds, the lake with the swans, and the great terrace with the balustrade, where we eat ices in the evening.

Others clambered up into family waggonettes, crowding in beside pretty girls with merry faces laughing under their snow-white caps; the good farmer's wife, with her gold necklace round her neck, driving.

"Whip away, Mathurine! home to the farm! We are going to eat fresh bread and butter, to drink our muscat

wine, to catch birds with the bird-call, to roll in the sweet-smelling hay all day long."

Happy boys! they were all going home. Ah, if I could have gone too!





## CHAPTER VII.

### A WELCOME SURPRISE.

THE college is deserted now ; everybody has gone. Squadrons of rats are careering through the dormitories in open day. The ink-bottles have dried up in the bottom of the desks. Among the trees in the court-yards and playgrounds, flocks of sparrows are keeping high festival. There is a gathering of all the sparrows of the town ; the sparrows of the college have invited their friends from the episcopal park, from the prefect's



gardens, and from morning to night the twittering is enough to deafen one. I hear them as I sit at work in my garret. For charity sake I was allowed to stay on during the vacation, and I worked for dear life at the Greek philosophers. But the room was very hot, and the ceiling very low. It was stifling up there. There were no shutters to the windows, and the sun pouring in made everything as hot as fire. The plaster on the joists cracked and fell off. Great blue-bottle flies, made stupid with heat, were sleeping as if glued to the panes. I fought against the drowsiness ; my head was as heavy as lead, and my eye-balls throbbed. "Fight hard ! Work away, Daniel Eyssette,—you must work for your home ! " But Daniel cannot work any more ; the letters on the page dance before his eyes, the book reels, the room turns round. To shake off this strange feeling he rises, takes a few steps, gets as far as the door, staggers, and falls in a heap to the ground, struck down by the sun. Out of doors the sparrows are twittering louder than ever ; the shrill cicadas are chirruping loud enough to go through one's head ; the plane-trees are white with dust, and their bark peels off as they stretch out their thousand branches to the sun.

I had a singular dream. I thought some one knocked at my chamber door, and that a thundering voice called, "Daniel ! Daniel !" Surely I knew that voice ! I used to hear it cry, " Jack, you are a donkey !" The knocking went on. " Daniel ! Daniel ! open the door ! It is I, your father ! "

Was it a nightmare ? I tried to answer, to rise. I got on my elbow, but my head was so heavy. I fell back and became unconscious.

When I came to my senses, what was my surprise to find myself in a little white bed, surrounded by dark-blue curtains, which cast a soothing shade all round. The light was soft and dim, and the room perfectly still. There was not a sound but the ticking of a watch and the tinkle of a spoon in a china cup. I did not know where I was, but I felt deliciously comfortable. The curtains opened, and my father bent over me with a cup in his hand ; a smile was on his face, and I thought his eyes were moist. Was I dreaming still ?

" Father ! is it really you ? "

" Yes, my boy, I am here ! "

" Great heavens, where am I ? "

" In the infirmary, where you have been for the last

week ; you have been very ill, but you are better now."

" But, father, how did you come here ? Kiss me once more ! Oh, the sight of you makes me think I am dreaming again ! "

He kissed me and said, " Come, lie quiet, be good ; the doctor won't allow you to talk. "

And, to prevent his boy from talking, my kind father went on talking himself.

" You must know, a fortnight ago, the wine company sent me to travel through the Cevennes ; you may think how glad I was to get the chance of coming to see you, my boy. I arrived at the college, and asked for you ; you were called and looked for, but you were not to be found. I asked them to show me your room ; the key was on the inside ; I knocked ; no answer. Well, I kicked in the door, and there you were, lying on the floor in a raging fever ! Poor fellow, how bad you were ! You were delirious for five days, and I never left you for a moment. How you did ramble ! You kept talking about restoring the house ; you cried out, ' Take away the keys ! oh, take away all the keys ! ' What, you are laughing ? I vow it was no

laughing matter for me—such nights as I had with you! And then that—M. Viot, wasn't it?—wanted to prevent my staying at night in the college. It was against the rules, he said. Bah! rules indeed! what do I care for his rules? Then he thought to frighten me by dangling his great keys under my nose; but I made him know his place, I promise you!"

I could not help shuddering at my father's audacity, but I soon forgot M. Viot and his keys. "And mother?" said I; and I stretched out my arms as if she could reach me and caress me.

"There, now, if you uncover yourself, I won't tell you anything. Lie still! Well, your mother is well, and she is at Uncle Baptiste's."

"And Jack?"

"Jack's a donkey! I don't mean that, you know, I mean Jack is a capital boy. Hang it all! don't throw off the bed-clothes like that! He has got into a comfortable situation; his master has taken him as secretary; he has nothing to do but to write from dictation; it is quite a pleasant situation."

"Poor Jack! but will he have to pass all his life writing from dictation, then?" I laughed heartily, and

my father laughed to see me laugh ; scolding me all the time because that confounded counterpane would keep falling off.

Oh, blessed infirmary ! what delightful days I spent behind my blue curtains ! My father never left me ; he stayed all day, seated at my bolster. How I wished he would never go away ! But, alas ! it was impossible for him to stay much longer ; the company's traveller had to finish his round in the Cevennes.

When my father was gone, I was all alone in the infirmary. I spent the whole day, reading when I could, in a great easy-chair which was rolled close to the window. My meals were brought to me by the yellow old hag. I drank my basin of soup, picked my wing of chicken. "Thank you, madame"—not another word passed between us.

One morning, I said mechanically, as usual, without looking up from my book, "Thank you, madame," and to my astonishment a very gentle voice close to me said, "How do you find yourself to-day, M. Daniel ?" I looked up quickly, and there were the black eyes smiling at me. The child hastened to inform me that the old woman was sick, and that she was desired to wait upon



I looked up quickly, and there were the black eyes smiling at me.

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me. Then with a graceful little curtsy, she added in a modest voice, that she was very glad to see me better, and that she would come back in the evening.

True to her word she came that evening, and the next morning, and the next after that too. I was enchanted. I blessed my fever and the old woman's illness, and all the illness in the world, since without that I should never have had these visits from my poor little fellow-prisoner. The black eyes came and went, thinking of everything, letting me want for nothing. I wished to thank this good little sister of charity, who at twelve years of age was such a perfect nurse, but no words would come. I began, "Mademoiselle"—and stopped short. Then the black eyes twinkled saucily; the little damsel saw my embarrassment and seemed inclined to laugh, but doubtless she thought a little conversation would amuse me and do me good, and she said, "Wasn't the milk nice and sweet last night? and do you like your soup to-day?" "It is excellent," said I eagerly, but stopped again. A comical look passed over her face. I could read her thoughts: "So that's not it. I never saw such a silent young gentleman. I wish he would talk a little; he looks as if he could talk too, but he



won't." The smile ended in a sigh, and she went out.

The moment she was gone I felt angry with myself for my shyness, and I made a firm resolution to thank her for all her kind care the first thing when she came next day. I watched for her footstep ; I knew she would come in with the soup and chicken, and put them before me with her kind, cheerful "Good morning, M. Daniel !" I had prepared a little speech, and was determined this time to lose no time the moment she entered. At last a footstep ! My heart beat, the door opened, and then entered—the hag ! I dared not ask for any explanation, I thought I should see the black eyes in the evening ; the evening came, but they never came ; neither then nor ever again. The gentle child was dismissed. I know the reason now. She had stolen some sugar to sweeten my milk, so she was turned away. I little knew what obligation I was under to her. Poor child ! what has become of her ? who has taken her in, charged as she was with having put a lump of sugar into a sick man's cup of milk ? Oh, Madame Cassagne ! what were you doing when you were so bent on being economical and stingy ?

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Good-bye to the pleasant days in the infirmary: and to complete my misfortunes, the pupils begin to return. Are the holidays over already?

For the first time for six weeks I got down to the courtyard. I was pale and emaciated—smaller than ever. In short, I had returned to What-d'ye-call'em.

The college now woke up. It was cleaned from top to bottom; the long corridors were slushed with deluges of water: M. Viot's keys clanked about everywhere. The monster had taken advantage of the vacation to add some more keys to his bunch, and some new rules to his code. Day by day the pupils came pouring in; the approach was again crowded with fine carriages and humble waggonettes. We miss some old faces, but new ones take their place. The schools are re-arranged, but no change falls to my lot. I am to have the middle school as before. I began to tremble already; but, after all, I said to myself, "Perhaps the boys will be better this half." On the morning of the opening we had a fine service with music in the chapel. The principal was there in his ample gown, with its silver palm-leaf; behind him was the full staff of the professors in robes of ceremony; the sciences had an orange badge, the classics

a white one. One of the professors had indulged in a jaunty cap, and a pair of light gloves. M. Viot eyed him with an evil glance.

From the body of the church, where I stood among the pupils, I cast envious looks at that goodly band of majestic gowns and silver badges. When should I take my place among them, and see my home rise again? Alas! a long, dreary road lay between me and that time. My heart was very heavy. The sweet strains of the music, the deep notes of the organ, affected me almost to tears. Suddenly I was aware of a noble countenance in the choir, which was turned towards me with a kindly smile. The sight of the Abbé cheered me up, and I felt brave again as I listened to the *Veni Creator Spiritus*.

Two days after that we had fresh festivities. From time immemorial it had been the custom to keep the principal's birthday in great state. There was a dinner in the open air, with a great display of cold viands and Limoux wine. This year, as usual, the principal spared no expense to give brilliancy to this little festival. It pleased his generous heart.

At daybreak the whole college—professors, masters, and pupils—were packed into open carriages with awn-

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ings, gay with the municipal colours, and off we set at full trot, followed by two great vans crammed with hampers of sparkling wine, and all sorts of good things. The way was led by a car, in which was the band, with the ophicleides playing as loud as they could ; the bells on the collars jingled merrily, the post-boys cracked their whips, and the piles of plates rattled against the tin porringers. All Sarlande, in night-caps, looked out of the windows to see the principal's procession pass. The scene of the gala was the meadows. As soon as we got there, the table-cloths were spread on the turf, and the boys laughed to see the professors lying on the grass among the flowers like any young schoolboys. And now the good things were handed round, and the corks flew ; all eyes were bright, and there was a buzz of talking.

Suddenly the principal rose, holding a paper in his hand. I looked the other way, and felt as sheepish as possible.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I have been sent a copy of verses by an anonymous poet ; our Pindar, M. Viot, has a rival this year ; the verses are addressed to myself, and though I feel they are too flattering, I ask your permission to read them."

"Read! read!" was re-echoed on all sides.

The principal began reading in his fine, sonorous voice. It was a neatly-turned compliment enough; and not only the principal, but each of the professors came in for a flower of the garland. Only there was not a word for the bad fairy of the spectacles. To be sure she might have been invoked as the Angel of the Refectory—it would have sounded well—but then it was not merited.

The verses were loudly applauded, and the author's name demanded. I felt myself turn the colour of a ripe pomegranate, but I rose and bowed modestly. I was cheered all round. The principal embraced me, the professors shook hands with me; some one proposed to publish the verses in the paper. All the incense rose to my brain with the sparkling wine, but I was sobered by hearing a muttered "Stupid!" from the Abbé, and a vicious growl from the keys. The principal now clapped his hands to restore silence.

"Now, M. Viot," he said, "it is your turn; after the lighter muse comes her statelier sister."

M. Viot gravely drew from his pocket a bound manuscript book, big with promise, and began to read, but not

till he had cast a side-glance at me. His production was an idyl after the manner of Virgil, in praise of "the rule." Menalcas and Dorilas take alternate strophes. Menalcas is a pupil from a school where the rule flourishes; Dorilas from one where it is ignored. Menalcas relates the sober pleasures of severe discipline, Dorilas the sterile joys of unwise licence. In the end, Dorilas is vanquished, he hands to his victor the prize of the contest, and both join their voices in a canticle in praise of the glories of the rule.

The poem was finished—a death-like silence! While it was being read, the boys had carried off their plates to the other side of the meadows, and were eating their tarts as far as they could get from Menalcas and Dorilas. M. Viot looked at them with a bitter smile.

The professors kept their countenances, but no one had the courage to applaud. Poor M. Viot! it was a signal defeat. The principal came to the rescue.

"The subject is a dry one, gentlemen," said he, "but the poet has made the best of it."

"Oh, I think it very fine indeed," cried I at random, for I was beginning to be afraid of my triumph.

I might have spared myself the degradation, for M.

Viot was not to be appeased. He bowed without speaking, and his smile was more ironical than ever. He was put out for the whole day; and when he went home in the evening, above all the songs of the boys, above the blare of the brass band and the rattle of the carriages as they rolled over the pavement of the sleeping town, I heard my rival's keys snarling, "Never mind, my fine poet, we will make you pay for this yet!"





## CHAPTER VIII.

### BOUCOYRAN.

THE birthday feast was the winding-up of the holidays. The days which followed it were like Lent after the Carnival. Every one, both master and pupils, felt out of sorts. After two whole months of repose, it was not easy to get things into their regular swing. The wheels went heavily, like the works of an old clock which has not been wound for a long time. Thanks to M. Viot's efforts, however, we got into our usual habits. Every



day at the stroke of the same hour, at the sound of the clock the bell rang, the little doors round the courtyards opened, and out streamed long files of boys, as stiff as if they were wooden soldiers, to walk two and two under the trees; ding-dong went the bell, and they marched back to the little doors and went in.

The bell rang for getting up, for going to bed, for tasks, for playtime, and so on every day throughout the year. What a loss Menalcas had in not being at the model college of Sarlande under the iron rod of M. Viot's rule !

The dark spot in the picture was my unfortunate school-room. Those dreadful boys had come back from their hills worse than ever. I think I had not improved either, for my long illness had left me nervous and irritable. I could not bear things as I used to do. Last half I had been too quiet with them; this half I was too severe. I thought I could checkmate them by this proceeding, and for the smallest prank I punished the whole form with impositions and detentions.

But it did not answer. My punishments were so frequent that at last they were disregarded. One day I felt myself beaten; my class was in open rebellion, and I had exhausted all my means of control. They shouted

and screamed, "Down with tyrants! out with him, hooroo! It is not fair!"—and the little ruffians, on pretence of remonstrating with me, crowded on my *estrade*, screaming like macaws. In despair I called in M. Viot. It was most humiliating, for ever since the birthday he had been very hard upon me, and I could see that he enjoyed my distress. When he came into the classroom, it was like throwing a stone into a pond alive with frogs. In a twinkling every boy was in his place, with his face buried in his book; you might have heard a pin drop. M. Viot walked up and down for a minute or two, shaking his bunch of old iron; then, with an ironical look at me, he went out. He was triumphant, and he was right. There is nothing like his stamp of man for keeping order in a school. They are not to be despised.

I was thoroughly miserable; the other masters laughed at me. If I chanced to meet the principal, he looked coldly at me. To crown all came the quarrel with a boy called Boucoyran. It was a terrible business. I am sure it is not forgotten yet in the annals of Sarlande. I will tell you about it, for it is time that the true version should be known.

Boucoyran then was a lad of fifteen, the terror of the

playground of the middle school; he had enormous hands and feet, no forehead, and the gait of a ploughman. The principal made a good deal of him, on account of his family, who had been benefactors of the college. Everybody was afraid of him; I felt the general influence, and I never spoke of him but in the most guarded manner. For some time we were on good terms, for although the impertinent way in which he spoke and looked was most annoying, I pretended not to observe it. One day, however, the fellow answered me in school with such insolence that I lost patience.

“Boucoyran,” said I, trying to keep my temper, “take your books and go home directly!”

Such an exercise of authority was a novelty; he stared at me without stirring. I saw I was in for a nasty business, but I had gone too far to retreat.

“Leave the room!” repeated I.

The pupils were all watching eagerly; for once there was silence. At my second command Boucoyran had recovered from his surprise, and you should have seen the look with which he replied, “I shan’t!”

There was a murmur through the class-room. I stood up indignant.





With one vigorous effort I hurled him off his bench.

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"You won't, sir? We shall see," and I came down.

Heaven knows nothing was further from my intention than to use violence; I only wanted to intimidate Boucoyran by the firmness of my attitude; but when he saw me come down from my *estrade*, he began to sneer and giggle in so insulting a way that I made a movement to take him by the collar, and turn him out.

The ruffian had an iron ruler hidden under his tunic. Scarcely had I raised my hand, when he struck me such a violent blow on the arm that the pain forced me to cry out.

Then and there I lost my head. I sprang on him, and with one vigorous effort I hurled him off his bench with a fling that sent him over and over out into the courtyard. It was done in a second. I had no notion I had so much strength.

The pupils were struck dumb with surprise. "The champion overthrown by that little pawn of a creature! What a stunning idea!" I had gained in authority all that Boucoyran had lost in prestige.

Pale and trembling with emotion, I resumed my seat. Every face was bent over the desks. I had conquered at last. But what would the principal and M. Viot say?

I had dared to raise my hand to a pupil. I felt that my time at the college was over.

These reflections came a little too late, but they made me tremble in the midst of my triumph. Every moment I expected to see the principal enter, but no one came. At the hour for recreation I was astonished to see Boucoyran laughing and playing with the rest. This quieted my apprehensions, and as the rest of the day passed over quietly, I thought he was going to keep his own counsel and I should hear no more of it.

Unluckily next day was a half-holiday, and Boucoyran did not come back at night. I had a presentiment of evil, and did not close my eyes all night. Next morning at early school his place was empty; whispers were going round the benches, and, though I said nothing, I felt mortally afraid. At seven o'clock the door was thrown open, and the boys all stood up. I knew I was lost. The principal entered first, followed by M. Viot and a tall old gentleman, buttoned up to the chin in a long great-coat, with a stiff collar four inches high. I guessed at once that he was Boucoyran's father; he was twisting his long moustache and growling between his teeth. They marched right into the middle of the

room, and from the moment they came in till they went out, not one of them vouchsafed me a single glance. The principal opened fire.

"Young gentlemen," said he, addressing the boys, "we come here to fulfil a most painful duty. One of your companions has been obliged to keep his bed for two days, in consequence of an act of violence as blamable as it is against all rules."

What was I to do? I tried to put in a word of excuse, "I beg your pardon, sir, but—" But the principal did not listen to me. Then it was the father's turn.

"Unhappy parent! There was his innocent child, who could not defend himself, who had been assaulted . . . there was his mother watching his bed in tears,"—and so on for ten minutes.

Everything that is not study being food for amusement for boys, my pupils were all laughing in their sleeve, and M. Viot absolutely grinned with pleasure.

I, poor wretch, meanwhile was standing on my *estrade*, swallowing, as best I could, all this humiliation, but I took good care not to answer. Had I done so I should have been dismissed at once, and whither could I turn then? So I held my tongue.



At last the three gentlemen withdrew. There was an instant uproar in the school-room ; in vain I tried to obtain silence ; my authority was gone for ever. It was a bad business. It got talked of in the town, and, "of course on the best authority," people gave details fit to make one's hair stand on end.

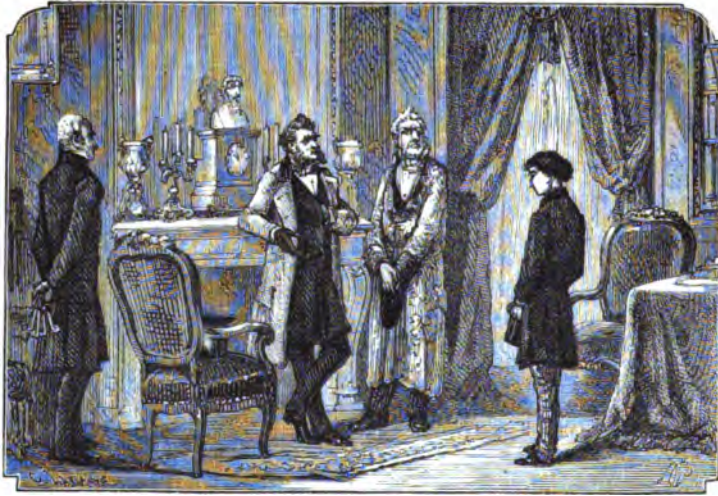
The principal was furious, and that I was not dismissed was owing entirely to the protection of the Rector of the university.

Far better would it have been for me had I been sent away at once. My life became intolerable ; the boys did not pay the slightest attention to my orders, and if I made the faintest attempt at remonstrance, they threatened to do like Boucoyran and complain to their fathers.

One of the newspapers of the town took up the affair, and stated that the master concerned, feeling himself injured by some expression which the father of the boy De Boucoyran had let fall in his perhaps too vehement, but perfectly justifiable anger, had sent a challenge to that distinguished personage. A challenge ! I scarcely knew the meaning of the word. I had not an idea what they were at ; but as I read the article on to the end, I came to the name of Roger, the fencing-master, and that

gave me some inkling of their meaning. It went on to say that I had been seen talking to him after the affair, and that I had laid the whole thing before him; that he, like an old soldier as he was, had affirmed that in the service things would not end there, and, in short, that I had requested him to carry a message to M. de Boucoyran. The whole thing was so absurd that I dismissed it from my mind. But I was wrong in so doing.





## CHAPTER IX.

HARD TIMES—MY FRIEND THE FENCING-MASTER—  
A LETTER FROM JACK—THE SUB-PREFECT.

WINTER had come ; it was a hard, black, bitter winter, as winters in the mountains generally are. The playgrounds were inexpressibly dismal in all the dreariness of their leafless trees and frozen ground. We got up by candlelight, and the water in the washstands was a mass of ice. The pupils were numb with cold ; the bell had to summon them over and over again. "Make haste,

gentlemen ! make haste !” cried the masters, stamping their feet to keep some life in them. Silently each boy took his place in the long file, and they shuffled down the half-lighted stairs as best they could, and along the vast corridors, where the wintry north-east wind whistled at its will. It was a hard time.

One day, about the 18th of February, there had been a heavy fall of snow during the night, and the boys could not play in the courtyards. When morning school was over, they had consequently been turned into the great hall to play till it was time to go into lecture. I had charge of them. What was called the great hall had been the gymnasium of the old naval college. It was a very large hall, with bare walls and small grated windows ; here and there were hooks half loose from their fastenings, the remains of ladders, and hanging from the main beam by a rope was an enormous iron hoop. The boys found great amusement in racing up and down the hall, kicking up clouds of dust ; some had managed to reach the iron hoop, and were holding on to it, shrieking, while others were trying to follow their example and reach it too.

Five or six of quieter temperament clambered up to

the windows, and were sitting there, eating their bread and watching the men who were shovelling the snow into great drays to be carried away.

But I was deaf to all the clatter. I had withdrawn into a remote corner, and there I was, reading a letter so busily that the boys might have torn down the gymnasium without my knowing what they were about ; for I had just got a letter from Jack, and, by Jove !—yes ! the postmark was Paris ! It ran as follows :—

“DEAR DANIEL,—I am sure this will take you by surprise, for you could have no idea that I was going to Paris. A fortnight ago I left Lyons. I could not endure that detestable old place where we all came to grief any longer. After you went away, it was more than I could stand ; so I came here with thirty francs and half a dozen letters from the curé of St. Nizier. Providence was kind, and threw me in the way of an old marquis, who engaged me as his secretary. He is writing his autobiography, and all I have to do is to write as he dictates. I get a hundred francs a month—nothing very magnificent, you see, but still I hope to be able to send home something now and then. Paris is such a

jolly place! First of all, we have not that eternal fog we had at Lyons; it does rain sometimes, but it is nice light rain, with sunshine all the time; I never saw anything like it anywhere else. And what do you think, Daniel? you won't believe me, but I have never wept once since I came."

When I had got so far, suddenly I heard the dead roll of a carriage over the snow under the windows. It stopped, and I heard the boys crying out, "The sub-prefect! the sub-prefect!" A visit from the sub-prefect meant something extraordinary; it was quite an event when he came, once or twice a year, to visit the college. But what was his visit to me? what was the whole town to me, compared with my letter? So, while my pupils were elbowing one another to have a peep at his worship getting out of the carriage, I stayed in my corner and read on:—

"You must know, dear Daniel, that our father is in Brittany, where he buys cider for a company. When he heard that I was secretary to a marquis, he insisted on my getting him to order several casks of cider. Unfortunately the marquis drinks nothing but wine, and that

sherry. I wrote to tell father so, and what do you suppose his answer was?—just the old, ‘Jack, you are a donkey!’ But all the same, you know, Daniel; I know the dear old man is really fond of me. Mother, as you know, is by herself; you really ought to write to her; she complains of your silence. I was forgetting to tell you one thing that will please you very much. I am lodging in the Quartier Latin, nothing less! I have a regular poet’s room, with a little window looking over roofs as far as you can see. The bed is not very large, but we could manage together on a pinch, and there is a little table in the corner, just made for writing verses on. If you could only see it all, you would never rest till you were here too. I wish you could come! perhaps some day I shall be able to send for you. Meantime don’t work yourself to death at that college of yours, and don’t forget

“Your loving brother  
“JACK.”

Dear old Jack! what a delicious sensation his letter gave me—half pain, half pleasure! All the last months of trouble seemed to vanish like a bad dream, and I said to myself, “Won’t I work away and be brave, like him!”

Just then the bell rang for lecture. The boys ranged themselves in file, and as they crossed the court I heard them talking much of the sub-prefect, whose carriage was still there. I left them with the professors, and flew upstairs. I longed to be alone in my own room, with my brother's letter. Halfway up I met the porter, who was coming down out of breath ; he had been looking for me.

"Oh, M. Eyssette," said he, "you are wanted at the principal's !"

The principal's ! What could he have to say to me ? I thought the porter looked queer. Suddenly I recollected the sub-prefect.

"Is his worship there ?" said I.

"He is there," replied the porter.

My heart beat high with hope, and I ran up the great staircase, four steps at a time. There are days in a man's life when he is mad. I suppose Jack's letter had excited me, and I took it into my head that the sub-prefect had heard of my verses, or become interested in me in some way or other, and that he had come to the college expressly to offer me the post of private secretary. As I turned into the corridor I met the fencing-master,



whom I rarely saw to speak to, but who now generally gave me a friendly nod. He was very pale, and looked at me with an air of embarrassment, as if he was not quite sure whether to speak to me or not, but he ended by passing on without speaking. I did not spend much thought on him ; I had something better to do, and the sub-prefect must not be kept waiting.

When I got to the door of the principal's apartment, my heart was beating so fast that I had to stop for an instant. Secretary to the sub-prefect ! no wonder it was beating ! I settled my collar, gave my hair a curl with a twirl of my fingers, and then gently turned the handle of the door. How little I anticipated what was before me !

The sub-prefect was standing, carelessly leaning on the mantelpiece, smiling over his light beard. The principal, in a morning gown, was beside him, cap in hand, in an attitude betokening humility, and M. Viot, who had been hastily summoned, had suppressed himself in a corner. The moment I entered, the sub-prefect began.

"Is this the gentleman," said he, pointing at me, "who has challenged one of the most honoured members of my council ?"

I grew as red as fire.

"Your blushing bears out the deposition of M. Roget. It amounts to a confession," said the magistrate. "You ought not to have waited to be told that a duellist is not worthy to remain in this honoured house, sir."

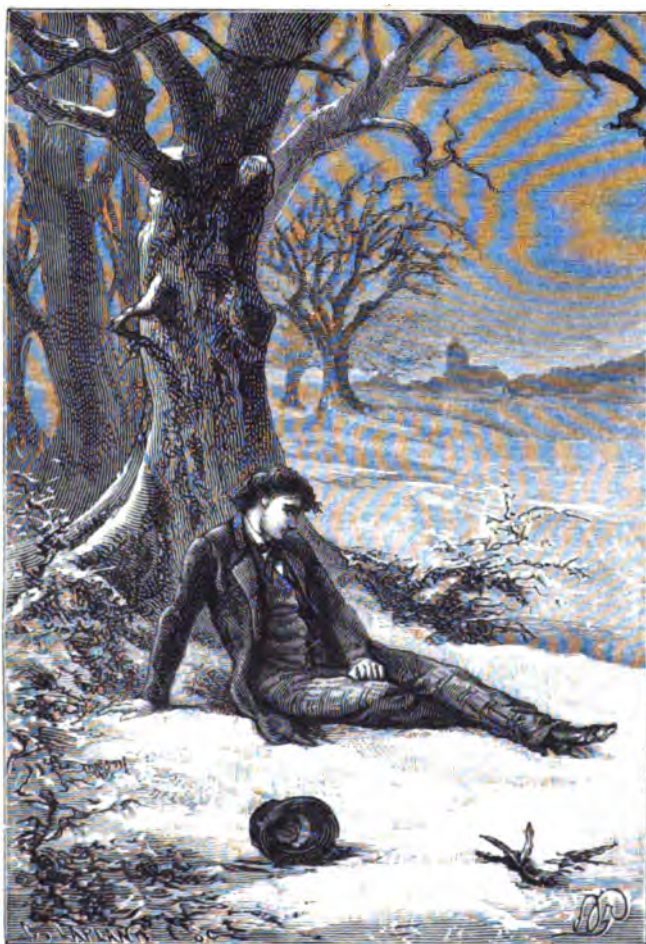
The deposition of M. Roget ! a duellist ! a confession ! Did I hear aright ? For the life of me I could not utter a word, and the sub-prefect, turning to the principal and M. Viot, continued,—

"Now, gentlemen, you know what remains for you to do."

The principal bowed to the ground, and replied that no doubt M. Eyssette deserved instant dismissal, but that, to avoid scandal, it would be better to keep him for another week. Just as long as it would take to get a new master.

At the terrific word "dismissal," which was equivalent to expulsion, my courage broke down. I bowed, and left the room without a word ; I rushed to my own room, and there I stifled my sobs in my handkerchief. I was indeed in a sad plight. I thought of the home I was to have restored, of my father in anger, my mother in tears.

At length the thought of Jack's letter darted into my mind. After all, why should I not go to him? He said he could take me in, and at Paris there is always some way of earning one's bread. A horrible thought stopped me; I could not go without money; there was the railway fare, and then I owed some small bills in the town—trifles in themselves, perhaps, but very heavy to me. I gave myself up to despair. I do not know how I got out of the college. I wandered about in the fields for hours. Was this the meadow? I did not know how I had got there. Evening was closing in, and more snow had fallen; in the dim twilight the wide expanse of snow bore an aspect of utter melancholy. Exhausted with fatigue and misery, I sank in the snow at the foot of a chestnut-tree. I had no power to think, and I might have lain there all night, but suddenly I heard afar off a bell ring. It was the college bell. It recalled me to life and recollection; I ought to be there watching the boys in the great hall at their evening recreation. The hall? A new idea crossed my brain. I was at once calmed and strengthened. I got up and took the road to Sarlande with the air of a man who feels all the support given by an irrevocable determination. This determination could not



I sank in the snow at the foot of a chestnut-tree.

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be carried out yet. I had to cross the great white plain, to wind my way through the dark, miry streets of the town, to enter the gloomy portal of the college, and then the great hall, where the recreation was going on. That over, I went with the pupils into the class-room, and there, surrounded by the noise of the unruly boys, I wrote the following doleful letter :—

“Forgive me, Jack, for the sorrow I am about to give you. You say you have left off weeping, but I am going to make you weep once more. It will be for the last time, dear Jack ; for, when this reaches you, your poor Daniel will have ceased to live.”

Here the riot grew more furious. I stopped writing, and punished right and left, but gravely, without any anger. I went on :—

“Jack, I was too miserable ; I had nothing left but to die. I have lost all. I am dismissed from the college. The story would take too long to tell you ; it is a ridiculous and inexplicable one. I have some debts, too, and I have no money for my railway fare, so I cannot go to you. Life is too terrible ; I had rather leave it behind—”

I had to stop again.

"Soubeyrol, five hundred lines for you ! Fougue and Loupé, your Sunday leave is stopped !"

Then I finished my letter :—

"Good-bye, Jack. There is a great deal more I should like to say to you, but the boys are looking at me, and I am afraid. Tell mother I was drowned skating, or that I fell over the cliffs ; tell her something, only never let her know the truth. Kiss her dearly for me, and our father too ; and try to make a home for them. I know now that I could not have done it. I love you dearly, Jack. Don't forget me."

That done, I began another ; it was to the Abbé. "Sir, (I wrote) I beseech you to send this letter to my brother Jack ; also to cut off some of my hair and put it up for my mother. Will you forgive the pain I am giving you ? I am going to die because I cannot bear life. I have been too unhappy here, and I cannot be happy elsewhere either. I know it is wrong, but I cannot help it. I am not strong like you. Pray for me ! You are the only human being here who has been kind to me. It is some comfort to me to thank you for it. Sir, I thank you.—DANIEL EYSSETTE."

I folded up this letter and the one for Jack in a large

envelope, on which I wrote : " Whoever finds this letter on my body is implored to deliver it into the Abbé Germane's own hands."

School was over ; supper followed, then prayers, and then the pupils and I went to the dormitory. It was my business to walk up and down till they were all asleep.

M. Viot came stealthily up ; he was making his rounds ; I heard the mysterious click of his key as he opened the various doors, and the muffled sound of his felt slippers on the boards.

" Good night, sir," murmured I.

" Good night, sir," replied the superintendent, under his breath.

I listened to the faint sound of his footsteps as they were lost in the long passage. I opened the door gently, and stood still a moment lest the boys should wake, but there was not a stir ; then I stole out noiselessly.

The cold north wind whistled mournfully under the doors as I passed. At the foot of the stairs lay the silent court, white with snow, surrounded by the gloomy mass of the buildings. High up on the far side, close to the roof, I saw the little light so familiar to me. I knew who was working up there, and from the bottom



of my heart I sent a last farewell to the good Abbé ; then I went into the great hall.

The old gymnasium was in deep cold shade, a sinister gloom seemed to fill it ; the moon shed a faint light through one of the narrow grated windows ; its beams fell directly on the iron hoop—the hoop that I had seen before me all these long hours. I knew there was an old wooden stool stowed away in a corner. I lifted it and placed it under the ring, and got on it ; yes, it was just the right height.

I had a long violet silk tie round my neck ; I took it off and knotted it round the ring in a running noose. The clock struck one ; with trembling hands I adjusted the noose. “Mother ! Jack ! forgive me !”

An iron grasp seized me round the waist, and, lifting me off the stool, deposited me on the floor.

“A nice time to practise gymnastics !” said a rough voice which I knew well. It was the Abbé, without his cassock, in vest and breeches, with his bands hanging loose over his waistcoat. One of his mighty hands had sufficed to lift me up ; the other still held the jug in which he had been getting some water.

The moonlight fell on his face ; there was no smile on

it as he looked into my scared and blanched face, but his voice sounded almost soft and tender as he repeated, "What a time to choose for gymnastics, my dear Daniel!"

I answered not a word.

"You must come with me," said the Abbé.

I shook my head and pointed to the handkerchief fastened to the hoop.

"I do not ask you, I command you," said the Abbé.

"You will come with me to my room, where there is a fire."

I still resisted. "Let me die, sir ; you have no right to command me to live."

A flash of anger gleamed in the priest's eyes. "Oh, that is it, is it?"—and, taking me up, he carried me off like a bundle.

A large fire was burning cheerily in his room ; close beside it was a table covered with papers. He put me in the chimney-corner, and sat beside me as I told him my sad story. When I had laid all my poor aching heart before him, he took my hands in both his, and said quietly,—

"I know—but all that is nothing, and putting aside

everything else, you would have been simply a fool to seek death for so little. It all comes to this: you have been dismissed—a very lucky thing for you, by the way—and what you have to do is to go away at once without staying your week. A fine hash you would make of your business! Never mind your little debts and your journey money, I'll see to that; we will talk about it to-morrow. And now not another word; I want to work and you want to sleep, only you must not go back to that dreadful dormitory. There, get into my bed; it had clean sheets to-day. I am going to write all night, and if I do get sleepy, I will take a nap on the sofa. Good night! not another word!"

I obeyed mechanically, for I was worn out. I seemed to be in a dream. I had thought myself so near the end—yet no, it would not have been the end, for now I thought of Him before whom I should have had to appear—a very different matter from appearing before a magistrate, misled by false reports,—and now, to find myself in a comfortable bed in this quiet, warm room! My eyes closed, but every now and then I opened them, and saw by the shaded light of the lamp that noble,

kind face, and the rapid pen which was noiselessly covering sheet after sheet of paper.

Next morning I was awakened by a shake of the shoulder. My good preserver was standing by me, and laughed to see that I had completely forgotten everything.

"Come, my boy," said he, "you are all right now. I knew quite well you were delirious last night. You had a return of that fever. I know you are too right-minded to think in your sober senses of such a cowardly sin as your fever put into your head. Come, make haste, there's the bell. Nobody will know anything about it; go to your pupils as usual, and come back to me at breakfast time."

All the events of the past night flashed back to my recollection. I could have fallen at his feet to thank him, but the good Abbé absolutely turned me out of the room.

I need not say that morning school seemed very long to me. The moment it was over I ran up again. I found the Abbé standing at his bureau, the drawer was wide open, and he was employed in reckoning pieces of gold which he was carefully arranging in little piles.

He turned his head as I came in, but said nothing. When he had finished counting, he locked his drawer, and beckoned to me with a genial smile.

“Look here!” he said; “this is for you. This is for your journey, and this is what you will want for your little debts. I had put this aside for getting a substitute for that little brother of mine, but his time to be drawn for the service is six years off still, and there is time enough for that.”

I tried to speak, but the good man did not give me time.

“Now, my lad, we will say good-bye; there is the bell for my lecture, and don’t let me find you here when I come back. The air of this college is not good for you. Away with you to Paris as fast as you can! Work manfully; above all, pray to God morning and evening—you won’t forget that?—and try to be a man. Mind what I say, for you are only a child now, Daniel, and I very much fear a child you will be all your life.”

He opened his arms with a divine smile, and would have embraced me, but I threw myself at his feet, sobbing. He laid his hand on my head, and prayed for me and blessed me; then he raised me up and kissed me on both cheeks. The bell stopped.

"There! I am late," said he, gathering up his notebooks; but as he was going out he turned round once more.

"I have a brother at Paris too—and a good man he is—a priest. You might go and see him—but bah! your crazy pate would never remember his address; there's no use giving it to you."

And he ran downstairs, his cassock streaming behind him, his trencher-cap in one hand, and a parcel of papers and old books in the other.

God go with you, good, kind Abbé!

I paused for a last look round the room. Once more I looked at the book-cases full of books, the little table where he wrote, the fire, now nearly out, the arm-chair where he sat, the bed where I had slept so well; and as I thought of that solitary life in which lay hidden so much courage, so much tenderness, so much resignation, so much true religion, I blushed at my own cowardice, and I made a vow never to forget the Abbé Germane's example.

But time was passing; I had to pack my trunk, to pay my bills, and to take my place in the diligence. As I was leaving the room, my eyes fell on a bundle of pens on the corner of the mantelpiece; they were all black with ink and age. I chose the blackest and

most worn, and put it in my pocket as a relic. Then I went down.

As I passed the old gymnasium, the door was still half open ; I could not refrain from casting a glance in. I shuddered, for there in the cold gloomy hall my violet necktie was still hanging to the iron hoop, and waving in the chill current of wintry air. From the depths of my heart I asked forgiveness from God and my mother, and I did not breathe till I was in the open air.





## CHAPTER X.

### THE KEYS.

AS I was going out of the gates, my mind still agitated by what I had seen in passing the gymnasium, the porter's lodge opened suddenly, and I heard a voice calling "M. Eyssette! M. Eyssette!" It was the porter and some tradesmen—my tailor and my shoemaker. They all wore an air of insolence. The shoemaker spoke first.

"Is it true that you are going away, M. Eyssette?"

"Yes," I replied quietly, "and to-day."



The shoemaker made an angry bound, so did M. Cassagne; but the bound of the shoemaker was the highest, because I owed him more than I did to the porter.

“What! this very day?”

“This very day, and I am on my way to take my place in the diligence.”

I thought they would spring at my throat.

“And my bill!” shouted the shoemaker.

“And my money!” roared the porter.

Without a word I went into the lodge, and, taking the Abbé’s gold from my pocket, I began to count out on the table the money I owed each of them. The tailor had had the wit or the good nature to say nothing. He now handed me his little bill, receipted it, and said with a bow,—

“I told these gentlemen that we were quite safe with M. Eyssette!”

It was like a scene in a play. The two angry men smoothed their frowning looks, and, having pocketed their money, began to lavish their compliments and regrets at my departure.

“What, sir! you are really going? That’s a pity indeed.”

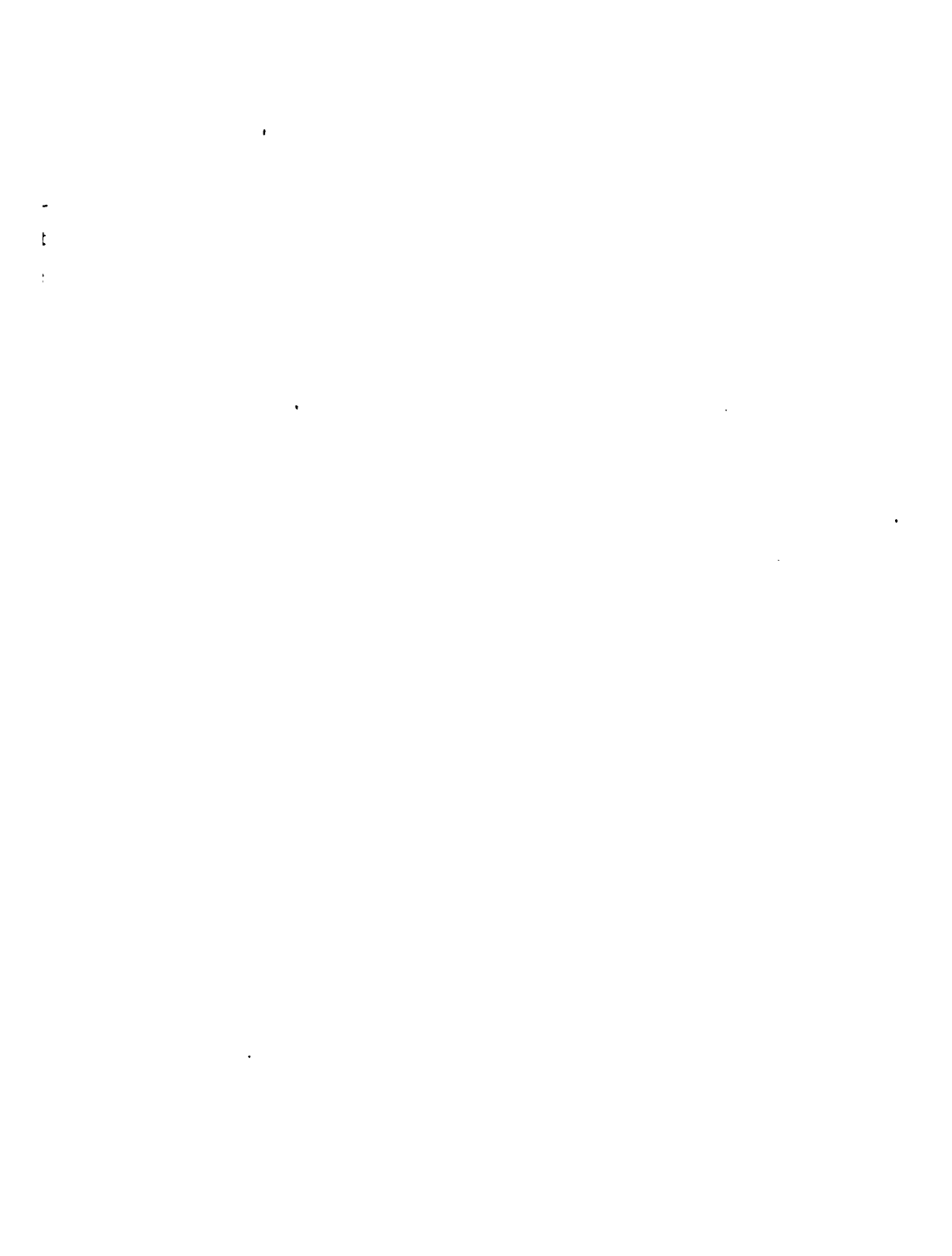
Cutting short their interjections, I hastened to secure my place in the blessed diligence which was to carry me far away from these monsters.

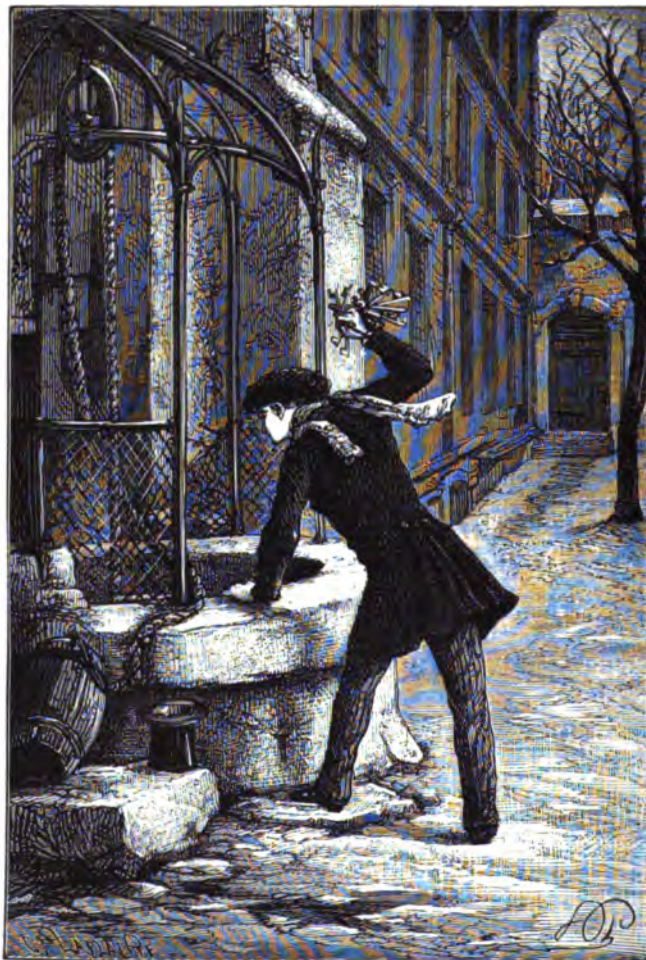
On my way to the office I had to pass the Café Barbette: it was full of people, but I did not go in. I had never liked the place; I thought of the day of my arrival, and the party given by my broad-shouldered predecessor. It was not a pleasant reminiscence, and I passed on as quickly as I could. A few steps further on I met the fencing-master. The treacherous fellow came forward as if to shake hands with me; but I hurried on without appearing to see him. I had to go back to the college for my trunk. The pupils were in lecture. The man I had brought up to carry my things went down, and I stayed behind a moment looking at the bare and dirty walls of my garret, the hacked desk; through the narrow windows I could see the plane-trees heavily laden with snow. I bade a long farewell to the scene of so much misery. As I went down the stairs I heard a voice thundering in one of the class-rooms. Well I knew that mighty voice; it was the Abbé's, and the sound of it warmed my heart. I passed on through the long corridors with the tall windows, behind whose

bars I used to see the kind black eyes. Heaven protect you, my dear little nurse! Where was she now? Where had she found a refuge when she was turned from the doors of this pitiless house into the cold world: she, more lonely, more helpless than I—more friendless; but, thank Heaven, more courageous. Yes, I had never felt really uneasy about her, because I was sure that her innocent face would be her protection; and because, in spite of her gentleness, I read in her eyes that she was possessed of the firmness which is a never-failing support.

I passed the principal's study with its double doors, and, a few steps further on, the study of the superintendent.

I stopped suddenly. O joy of joys! the keys, the dreadful keys, were hanging in the lock, gently stirred by the wind. For an instant I looked at that horrible bunch of inquisitorial keys with a sort of superstitious dread, and then I yielded to the temptation, absurd and childish as it was. You know, reader, that I never was perfect. Cautiously, surreptitiously I drew the key out of the key-hole, and hid the bunch under my great-coat; then I ran downstairs as hard as I could.





I flung the detested keys into the well.

There was a very deep well at the end of the courtyard ; there was not a creature in sight ; I ran breathlessly across the court, and with all my might I flung the detested keys into the well. Clank ! clank ! clank ! I heard them strike against the side as they fell, then splash into the water, and then the heavy thud when they reached the bottom. After that I went away contented.

As I passed out through the porch I saw M. Viot, but not the M. Viot that was familiar to me, for he was without the keys ; he looked scared and haggard, and was hurrying eagerly about in every direction ; he gave me a blank stare of distress, and I thought he was going to stop me to ask whether I had seen *them*, but he did not venture. The porter called over the stairs, "No, sir, they are not there." I heard the superintendent groan to himself, "Oh, heavens ! what shall I do ?" and he tore away like a madman to make further search.

I could not stay to enjoy the scene any longer, for the horn of the diligence was sounding, and I must not be left behind. And now good-bye to the gloomy, smoke-stained college. Good-bye to the savage, stupid boys who did not know to what extremities of despair and folly they were driving their unfortunate teacher.

Go your best pace, coachman ! get all you can out of your three white horses ; your rumbling old diligence is carrying me to my native town and my uncle's house, where I shall embrace my mother. After that I steer my course for Paris and Jack in the Quartier Latin.





## CHAPTER XI.

### UNCLE BAPTISTE.

MY Uncle Baptiste, my mother's brother, was a singular being. He was neither good nor bad ; he was married to a great dragoon of a woman who kept him in perpetual awe of her ; he was like an old child rather than a grown man.

He had but one passion in life, that was, colouring prints. For the last forty years he had been living surrounded with little mugs, paint-brushes, and colours, and



he spent his life in painting the wood-cuts in illustrated journals. The house was full of old *Illustrated News*, *Charivaris*, *Pictorial Magazines*, maps—everything that could take a brilliant colour. Even when his wife kept him short of money, and he could not buy any illustrated papers, he would colour books. I have had in my hands a Spanish grammar which my uncle had decorated from beginning to end ; the adjectives were blue, the substantives pink, and so on.

My mother had been living with this old maniac and his sterner half for the last six months. She used to spend the livelong day seated at her brother's side, trying to be useful. She cleaned his brushes, and filled his mugs with water ; she could have borne it all if my uncle had not conceived a supreme contempt for my father when he failed ; and from morning to night my poor mother was condemned to hear, " Eyssette is out of his mind." The old fool ! it was too absurd to see the self-satisfied air of quiet conviction with which he used to say it, painting away all the time at his Spanish grammar. He is not the only man I have known who spent their lives painting Spanish grammars, and declaring that all the rest of the world was cracked.

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I did not become acquainted with all the details of the weary life my mother led till long afterwards ; but I at once saw enough to make me feel sure that she could not be happy, say what she would. When I arrived, they were just sitting down to dinner. My mother sprang to meet me, and you may imagine her joy at having her son once more ; yet she seemed ill at ease. She spoke but little,—her voice had always been low, soft, and timid,—and she scarcely raised her eyes from her plate. I could not bear to see the poverty-stricken look of her scanty black dress. My uncle and aunt gave me a very cold reception ; my aunt asked me in a frightened manner whether I had dined, and when I hastily assured her that I had, she breathed freely again. I saw that she was trembling for her dinner. A pretty dinner it was ! nothing but salt cod and chick pease ! My uncle inquired whether it was vacation time. I replied that I had left the college and was going to Paris, where my brother had found a desirable situation for me. I invented this story partly to prevent my mother's being uneasy, and also that my uncle might not say I was out of my senses too. When my aunt heard that I had a good situation, she said to me with a meaning look,—

"Daniel, you must get your mother to Paris ; the poor dear soul is sad at being so far from her children ; and besides, you know she is living on us, and your uncle cannot always be the milch-cow for the whole family."

"That's just it," said my uncle with his mouth full, "I am a regular milch-cow." The expression delighted him ; he repeated it several times with the utmost gravity.

Like all old people, they were a long time over their dinner. My mother scarcely tasted anything ; she said a few words to me, and looked at me now and then as if by stealth. My aunt was watching her.

"You see," she said to her husband, "the joy of seeing Daniel has taken away your sister's appetite ; yesterday she ate two pieces of bread, to-day only one."

Oh, my dear mother ! if I could but have taken you away that very evening—away from that heartless couple ! But, alas ! I was myself a wanderer, with nothing but chance before me after I had paid for my railway-ticket ; and I knew that my brother's little room would not hold us three.

If I could even have had a good talk with you alone, and kissed you when we were by ourselves ! But they





They were both watching us all the time.

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would not leave us for an instant alone. The moment dinner was done, my uncle sat down to work at his Spanish grammar, my aunt began rubbing her spoons, but they were both watching us all the time.

The hour of my departure came, and we had not had a word together. My heart was very full as I went down the long avenue which leads to the railway station, and I vowed solemnly to be a man henceforward, and to think of nothing but making a home for my mother.

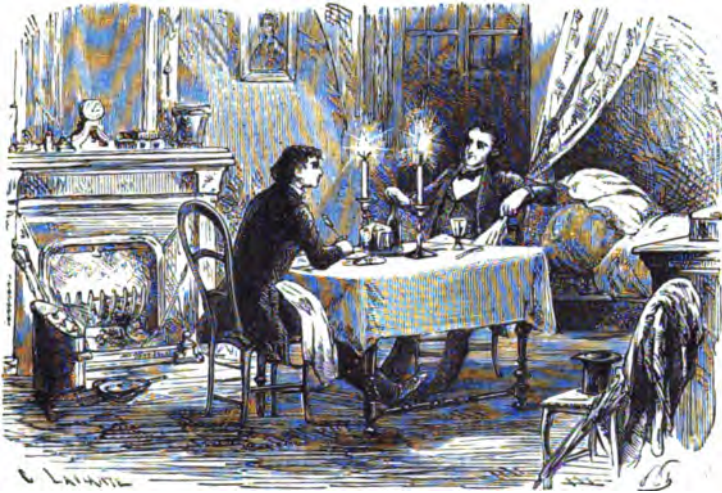




## PART II.







## CHAPTER I.

### MY GOLOSHES—JACK'S STORY.

IF I were to live as long as Uncle Baptiste—and he must be as old as an old baobab-tree in Central Africa—I could never forget my first journey to Paris in a third-class carriage.

It was near the end of February, and the cold was still very great. Outside was the grey sky, wind, frost, bare hills, long rows of leafless vines ; inside were sailors singing, great rough peasants snoring away with their

mouths wide open like dead codfishes, old women with baskets, babies and nurses, and all the abominations which people without any delicacy of feeling carry about with them when they travel ; everything smelling of smoke, garlic sausages, and mouldy straw.

When we started, I took possession of a corner to be next the window, but we had not gone a couple of miles when the warder of a military hospital asked me to change places with him, as he wanted to be opposite his wife. I had not spirit enough to refuse, and, accordingly, there I was for five hundred miles between this horrid man, whose clothes smelt of linseed, and a great fat woman from Champagne, as stout and as heavy as a drum-major, who snored on my shoulder almost the whole way. The journey lasted two days. All that time I never stirred. I sat with clenched teeth, jammed between those two torments, without room to turn my head. As I had neither money nor provisions, I was fasting the whole time. Two days without food seem very long. I had indeed a two-franc piece, but I knew I should want it worse when I got to Paris, if I did not find Jack at the station, and I manfully resisted the temptation to spend any of it. What made it worse was that

everybody else was eating perpetually. My neighbour, the warder, had crammed a great covered basket between my legs, and every now and then he got a pork pie or sausages or petitoes out of it for himself and his wife. On the second day that basket became a real nuisance. But the pangs of hunger were not the worst of that terrible journey. I started from Sarlande without boots; I had nothing on my feet but a pair of india-rubber goloshes, which had answered capitally for making my rounds at night in the dormitory; they were just the thing for that, but hardly for a winter's journey in a third-class carriage. Heavens! how cold I was! I could scarcely keep from crying. At night, when everybody else was asleep, I managed to get my feet up, and I rubbed them for hours, vainly trying to warm them. I was glad my mother did not see me then.

But in spite of the hunger which was gnawing my vitals, and the cold which was making me cry, I wouldn't have given up that half-place between the fat woman and the warder for all the world, for at the end of my sufferings I looked forward to Jack and Paris.

On the second night about three o'clock I was suddenly awakened. The train had stopped, the

carriage was all alive. I heard the warder say to his wife, "Here we are!"

"Where?" said I, rubbing my eyes.

"Bless your soul, at Paris!"

I got to the door; I could see no houses, nothing but a bare place with some gaslights, some heaps of coal, and a great red light a little way off. There was a confused rumbling—something like the noise of the sea, and a man with a lantern was going along calling out "Paris! All tickets ready! Paris!"

I felt a thrill of fear. I had good reason for that thrill, if I had only known it. Five minutes later we were in the station.

There was Jack! He had been there for the last hour. I saw his tall figure in the distance, behind the barrier, with his long arms going like a semaphore. I forgot how cramped I was, and sprang to him.

"Jack! My dear old fellow!"

How we hugged each other! Unluckily, railway stations are not meant for such effusions. There are waiting-rooms and luggage-rooms, but there is no room for sentiment—no place for anything but bodies. So we

were jostled and trampled on, and the officials kept crying, "Get on, get on!"

"Come along," said Jack; "I'll get your trunk tomorrow."

And arm-in-arm, with hearts as light as our purses, we set off for the Quartier Latin.

I have tried since to recall the fireside impression that Paris made on me that night; but I have often found that places, like men, have a special physiognomy the first time we see them, which we never catch again. Paris has never looked to me again as it did that night. In vain I try to find it: it is like the recollection one has of a town which one has passed through in a fog long ago.

I remember a bridge over a black river, quays all deserted, and an immense garden on the other side of the quay. I could dimly see through the railings buildings like huts, trees shining with frost, and pieces of water; and I heard strange sounds in the gloom. My arm trembled, but Jack said,—

"That's the Zoological Gardens; it is full of lions and tigers and hippopotamuses."

In fact, we could smell the wild beasts, and now and

then a shrill cry or a hoarse roar reached our ears. I was fascinated ; I could not help stopping and trying to penetrate the gloom with my eyes. The mysterious garden seemed to mingle with the species of awe which I felt of Paris that first night, and I seemed to have just landed in some gruesome cavern full of ferocious animals ready to spring upon me. Happily for me I was not alone, Jack's arm was round me.

On we went, ever so far, through interminable black streets. At length we halted in a little square where there was a church.

"We are just at home now," said Jack. "That is St. Germain des Prés. Our room is up there."

"What ! in the steeple ?"

"Very nearly ; it is convenient for knowing the hour."

He was not exaggerating. His little garret was in the sixth story of the house adjoining the church, and his window opened on the steeple just opposite the dial. Wearily I toiled up the stairs, but when he opened the door, I gave a cry of joy. A fire ! O how heavenly ! and I ran to the fireplace to hold my feet to the blaze, at the risk of melting my goloshes. Then for the first time Jack perceived how I was shod ; he laughed heartily.

"Well!" said he, "many celebrated men have reached Paris in wooden shoes, and are proud of it; but you may boast of being the only one who has ever arrived in goloshes—it is original. But now put on these slippers and set to work at this pie."

So saying he pushed a little table already laid close to the fire. Oh the luxury of that night in that little room! The cloth looked so white in the dancing fire-light; and then that wine in the sealed bottle, how it smelt of violets! And the pie with its delicious golden-coloured crust! They don't make such pies now, and that wine is not to be had.

Jack was exactly opposite to me at the little table; he filled my glass, and every time I raised my eyes I saw his looks fixed on me with all a mother's tenderness. As for me I was so happy to be there that I was in a fever. I talked incessantly.

"Do eat," said he, filling my plate.

But I talked instead of eating. To make me hold my tongue he began to gabble away too, and without a pause he told me all he had been doing for the last year.

"When you were gone," said he (and he told me the saddest parts of his story without losing his bright sweet



smile), "when you were gone the house was too dreary. Father did not work any more; he spent all his time in the warehouse calling me a donkey, and that did not help matters. Every morning brought fresh protested bills, every other day there was an invasion of bailiffs, every time the bell rang our hearts were in our mouths; lucky for you that you were away then! After a month of this wretched life, my father went to Brittany for the wine company, and my mother went to Uncle Baptiste's. I saw them both off. You may fancy what that was. When they were gone, all the furniture was sold. Yes, Daniel, sold in the streets under my very eyes. I can tell you it is hard work to see one's home going bit by bit like that. You don't know till you see them going how every one of those pieces of furniture, every one of those curtains seems to be part of yourself. You recollect the press, the one with the rosy little Cupids and the fiddles on the panels; well, when they took that away I was nearly running after the man who bought it, calling out, 'Stop him!' You know what I mean, don't you? The only things I kept were a mattress, one chair, and a broom; that broom was very useful, as you

shall hear. I put my treasures in a corner of one of the rooms, for the rent was paid for two months, and there I was sole occupant of that bare, cold, empty apartment. Oh, how desolate it was! Every evening when I came home from the office it was like a fresh grief and surprise to find myself alone in those bare walls. I used to go from room to room clapping the doors as loudly as I could to make some sound. Sometimes I thought I heard some one in the empty shop, and I cried 'Coming!' When I went into our mother's room I could not help expecting to see her there, sitting in the window at her knitting. To make things worse, the blackbeetles came back. The disgusting creatures, which we had so much trouble in banishing when we came to Lyons, no doubt found out that you were all gone, and they tried a fresh invasion, much more terrible than the first. At first I tried to keep them down. I spent the whole evenings in the kitchen, with a candle in one hand and my broom in the other, fighting like a lion among them. But I was single-handed, it was not like the time we had Annou there. And they came in greater swarms than ever. I verily believe every blackbeetle in Lyons came—heaven knows there are enough of them in that odious

damp town! As for the kitchen I was very soon obliged to give that up to them. Sometimes I looked in through the keyhole ; there were myriads of them. But don't imagine that they stayed there. You don't know these cursed beasts of the North. They go everywhere. In spite of doors and locks they got out of the kitchen, and came into the dining-room where I had made up my bed. I had to carry it first to the shop then to the sitting-room. Oh, you are laughing? I should just like to have seen you there! I was forced to evacuate room after room, till at last I was in our own little old room at the end of the passage. I had two or three days' respite then, but when I woke one morning I saw hundreds of them swarming up the handle of my broom, while another detachment was marching in good order towards my bed. My arms gone, my last stronghold carried by storm, the only thing left me was flight.

"I took to my heels, leaving mattress, broom, and chair in possession of the blackbeetles, and I never set foot in that horrible house again.

"I stayed some months longer at Lyons ; they were very long and very dreary. I was so doleful that my nick-

name at the office was Mary Magdalene. I had not one friend, my only pleasure was your letters. Oh, Daniel, how well you write ! I am sure you might write for a magazine if you would. You are not like me ; by dint of writing always from dictation I have about as much intelligence as a sewing-machine. I cannot originate anything. My father was right when he used to call me a donkey. After all there are worse things than donkeys ; they are patient and enduring, and they have good backs of their own. But to go on with my story.

“In all your letters you talked about making a home again, and your eloquence inspired me with the same grand idea ; but you see at Lyons I scarcely earned enough to keep myself alive, so I thought I would try Paris. I fancied I could do more here to help the family, and that I could work better for our grand design. I made up my mind to go, but not without some preparation. I did not want to be in the streets of Paris like an unfledged nestling. It is all very well for you, Daniel, there is always luck for a fellow like you, but you know I was only a donkey.

“So I went to our friend the priest of St. Nizier, and asked him for some letters of introduction. He has

plenty of acquaintance in high life in the Faubourg St. Germain. He gave me two letters, one to a count, the other to a duke. You see I am pretty well dressed. I went to a tailor's, who, on the strength of my good looks, consented to make me a complete suit on credit, a black coat, with proper waistcoat and trousers. I put my letters in pocket, my new clothes in a bundle, and set off with three Napoleons in my pocket; that is, thirty-five francs for the journey, and twenty-five to go upon. The morning after I got to Paris I was in the streets by seven o'clock, dressed in my black coat and yellow gloves. I may tell you for your guidance that I made a great mistake there. At seven in the morning all black coats are in bed, or ought to be; but I knew nothing about that then, and I was proud to show mine in those wide streets with my new boots sounding on the pavement. I thought too that I should have a better chance of meeting luck early in the morning; that's another mistake, for Fortune never gets up early in Paris!

"I went first to the count's in the Rue de Lille, and then to the duke's in the Rue St. Guillaume. At each place I found the under-servants in the middle of

washing out the courtyards and brightening the plates of the bells.

“When I said I had come to their masters on business from the Curé of St. Nizier, the rascals laughed in my face, and splashed my legs with their buckets of water. Well, that was my fault too. Nobody but chiropodists go to see people before they are out of bed. I made a note of that.

“Now if you had been in my place you would never have gone near those houses again, to be laughed at by the domestics ; but I went boldly back that same day in the afternoon, and just as in the morning, I said to the servants that I wanted to see their masters on business. It was well I did, the gentlemen were at home, and I was shown up at once. I found two very different men, and met with two very different receptions. The count received me very coldly ; the sight of his long lean face, as solemn as a tombstone, disconcerted me. I could find no words to address him. He scarcely spoke either. He glanced at the curé's letter, put it in his pocket, took down my address, and dismissed me with a frigid wave of the hand. ‘I will see about it ; you need not come back ; if I hear of anything, I will write !’

"I went out chilled to the heart. Happily the welcome I received at the next place revived me ; things were very different there. The duke was the most genial, the most joyous of men ; he launched out into expressions of his affection for his good friend the Curé of St. Nizier ; whatever came from him could not fail to be heartily welcome in the Rue St. Guillaume. We were friends at once. He offered me a pinch of perfumed snuff, took me by the arm and shook my hand, as he dismissed me with ' I will take care of you. In a few days I shall be sure to have what will suit you. Meantime come and see me as often as you please.'

"I went away in ecstasies. I was discreet enough, however, to wait for two days before I went back ; the third day I made my way there again. A great lout of a fellow in blue and gold asked me my name. I said with a confident air, ' Say it is the gentleman from the Curé of St. Nizier.' He came back in a moment or two. ' His grace is engaged just now, sir ; he begs you will call another day.'

"This seemed only reasonable. The next day I went again at the same hour. The man in blue and gold was







“The gentleman from the Curé of St. Nizier, I think?”

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perched on the steps, like a macaw. The moment he saw me he said,—

“ ‘His grace is gone out.’

“ ‘Oh, very well,’ said I, ‘I will come again. Please to say it was the person from the Curé of St. Nizier.’

“I did go again, and again after that, for several days, but always with the same success. The duke was bathing, or at mass, or at the tennis court, or he had company. That last I felt to be an insult. Was not I fit for company then?

“At length I felt so ridiculous with my eternal ‘From the Curé of St. Nizier’ that I left off saying it. But the blue macaw on the steps never failed to greet me with ‘The gentleman from the Curé of St. Nizier, I think?’ and then all the other blue macaws who were lounging about the courtyard would laugh. Rascals! I longed to give them a good cudgel from St. Nizier.

“I had been about ten days at Paris, when one morning I had come back crestfallen enough from the duke’s. (I had sworn that I would go there till they actually turned me out.) The porter where I lodged put a little note into my hand. Guess whom it was from. From the count

himself, desiring me to call as soon as possible on his friend the Marquis d'Hacqueville, who was in want of a secretary. You may think what was my delight, and what a good lesson it was; this cold, stiff count, from whom I expected nothing, had recollected me and worked for me; while the other, so full of his professions, and his welcomes, had let me dance attendance in his courtyard for a whole week, making not only myself, but his very good friend the Curé of St. Nizier, the laughing-stock of his insolent footmen in blue and gold. That is life, my dear fellow, and one learns it fast enough in Paris.

"Without a moment's delay, I hastened to the Marquis d'Hacqueville. I found a fussy little old gentleman, all on wires and as brisk as a bee. He had a fine aristocratic face, pale and refined, hair as straight as a porcupine's quills, and only one eye. He had lost the other by a thrust from a sword years ago, but the remaining eye was so bright, so speaking, so full of animation, that you could not say the marquis was blind of an eye; you felt rather that he had two eyes in one.

"When I was shown in to this singular old man, I

began with some commonplace or other, but he cut me short.

“‘No set phrases, please ; I don’t like them. Let us come at once to the point. The case is this :—I wish to write my own memoirs. Unfortunately I have begun late, and I have no time to lose, for I am growing old. I have calculated that, not losing an instant, it will take me three years’ labour to carry out my intention. I am seventy ; my limbs have failed, but my head is as good as ever ; I can hope, therefore, to have three years before me in which to complete my work. But I have not a minute to spare, and that is exactly what I could not make my late secretary understand. The fool (he was a very intelligent young man, and I liked him extremely, upon my word !) took it into his head to fall in love. No harm so far ; but this morning the fellow came and asked me for two days’ leave of absence, that he might get married. Two days indeed ! Not one minute ! “But, my lord—” he said. “There’s no ‘But, my lord,’ ” I said ; “if you go away for two days, you go for good.” “Then I must go, my lord.” “Good morning, then.” And he actually went ! Now, I reckon on you to do what I want. These are my conditions : my

secretary comes at eight in the morning, bringing his breakfast with him ; I dictate till twelve ; at twelve he breakfasts alone ; I never eat in the morning. After his breakfast (which must be very short) we set to work again. If I go out, he goes with me ; he carries pencil and paper. I dictate everywhere, in the carriage or walking—everywhere in short. In the evening my secretary dines with me, and after dinner we look over the day's work. I go to bed at eight, and he is free till eight next morning. I give a hundred francs a month and dinner. It is not a fortune, but in three years, when the memoirs are finished, my secretary will receive a present, and a right royal one, on the word of a D'Hacqueville. The three things I require are punctuality, that he does not take it into his head to marry, and that he should write well from dictation. Can you write from dictation ?”

“ Perfectly, my lord,” said I. I could hardly help laughing ; it was so absurd that my fate should always be to write from dictation.

“ Well, then, sit down and begin,” said the marquis. “ There are paper and ink. I am at chapter xxiv., ‘ My difference with M. de Villèle.’ Write.”

“ And he set about dictating in a little shrill voice like

a cricket ; and all the time he kept skipping about the room. Thus I entered the service of this original, and so far we are satisfied with each other ; he is a thoroughly kind-hearted man at bottom. This evening, when he heard I was expecting you, he insisted on my taking away this bottle of old wine for you. It is what we drink every day at dinner, and I need not say we dine well. As for breakfast, I take that with me. You would laugh to see me eating my two pen'orth of Italian cheese off a beautiful plate of the finest china, on a napkin marked with his coronet and arms. He does not do it from stinginess, but to save his old cook the trouble of preparing another meal. I don't dislike my life. The memoirs are very interesting and instructive, and I learn many a thing about M. de Villèle and M. Decazes which I may turn to account some day or other. At eight o'clock I am free ; then I go to a news-room to look at the paper, or perhaps to have a chat with our old friend Pierrotte. You remember him, don't you ? old Pierrotte of the Cévennes, mamma's foster-brother, you know. But he is Monsieur Pierrotte now, and quite a great man. He has a fine china-shop in the Passage du Saumon, and as he was always fond of our

mother, his house is open to me at all times. It was a resource for me in winter evenings, but now I have you I want no resources. Nor you either, eh, old fellow? Oh, Daniel, how happy we shall be!"





## CHAPTER II.

### “MY MOTHER JACK.”

JACK has finished his *Odyssey* ; now it is my turn. The fire, burning low, warns us to go to bed ; the candles are burnt to the socket ; but we do not take their hints, and we talk on.

I told him all about my life at the college—that sad life which you recollect, no doubt, Reader. I told him how I had madly tried to put an end to it, and I told him the Abbé’s terrible prediction, “A child you will be



all your life." Jack sat with his elbows on the table, his face hidden in his hands, and heard my confession to the end. From time to time I saw him shudder and heard him whisper, "Poor little fellow! poor little fellow!" When I had done, he got up, took my hands in his, and said, with a quivering voice,—

"The Abbé was right, Daniel. You see, a child is just what you are, a child that cannot go alone through life, and you did quite right in coming to take refuge with me. From this day you are not only my brother, you must be my son; and since our mother is so far away, I must take her place. Shall I, Daniel? I won't be troublesome to you, but you will let me always be at your side, and hold your hand; then you can look at life like a man, without being afraid that it will swallow you up."

I answered by falling on his neck. "Oh, Jack! my mother Jack! how good you are to me!" I wept hot tears on his shoulder; I could not stop; I was just as he used to be at Lyons. He never wept now, he said; the cistern was dry long ago.

The clock struck seven. A pale light began to steal through the window; it was very cold.



“Since our mother is so far away, I must take her place. Shall I, Daniel?”

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"There's the daylight," said Jack; "you ought to be asleep. Get into bed quick; you want it."

"And you, Jack?"

"Oh! I have not got two days of railway to make up for. Besides, I must leave some books at the reading-room on my way to the marquis, and I have no time to lose. My lord means what he says. I shall be back soon after eight. Don't you stir till you are quite rested, and then you can go out a little. Above all I advise you—"

Here followed a string of advice, all highly important, no doubt; the only thing was that I had by this time laid down, and, without being actually asleep, my faculties were none of the clearest. What between fatigue and the supper, I was quite dazed. I had a confused notion of something about a restaurant close by, and money in my waistcoat pocket, and bridges, and asking my way from policemen, and about the steeple of St. Germain as a landmark. Yes, I heard about the steeple—two, three, four, five, ten steeples, all ranged like milestones round my bed; and I had a vision of some one going across the room and making up the fire, and coming back to spread a coat over my

feet, and then kissing me, and then shutting the door gently.

I think I should have slept on till he came back if I had not been awakened by a bell close to me as it seemed.

It was the great iron college bell, saying, "Wake up! time to dress! wake up, ding, dong!" With one bound I was on the floor, calling out, as I used to do in the dormitory, "Now then, gentlemen!" I burst out laughing when I found I was in Jack's room, and that what I had taken for the college bell was the bell of a factory close by. It was like the college bell, but it had not such a cruel iron sound. When I remembered I should never hear that odious sound again, I began careering about the room for joy. I opened the window half-expecting still to see the dreary plane-trees and the man with the keys creeping along under the opposite wall.

Just then it was striking twelve everywhere. The great clock of St. Germain boomed out its twelve heavy strokes, followed by the Angelus, almost in my ears. The sonorous tones fell in triplets, and seemed to fill the room with floating sound. All the other steeples of Paris took up the Angelus in their various keys, and, as

if attracted by the chimes, a ray of sun broke through the dusky clouds and made the wet roofs glisten. Far beneath me Paris was growling and rumbling. I stood for a little while watching the domes, the spires, the towers, as they caught the sunshine, and then, as the roar of the great city came surging up, I felt a wild longing to go and mingle in the crowd of life below, and I said, with a sort of intoxication, "I will go and see Paris."





### CHAPTER III.

#### THE BUDGET.

PROBABLY more than one Parisian said that evening, as he went home to dinner, "What a queer little being I met to-day!" Indeed, it is true that my long hair, my short trousers, my goloshes, my blue stockings, my countrified appearance in general, and the solemn air peculiar to undersized people, must have produced a most comical effect.

It was one of those soft, warm days which often, at

the close of winter in Paris, are more spring-like than the spring itself. The streets were full of people. I went straight on, but I was a little confused by the bustle all round me, and I timidly kept close to the wall as I went along. I was jostled every moment, and I kept saying, "I beg your pardon," and blushing. My great dread was of looking as if I had just come fresh from the country, and therefore I would not stop to look in at the shop-windows, and I would not have asked my way for any consideration. I went up one street, then another, keeping straight on. People stared at me; sometimes they laughed and turned round to look after me; and I heard a woman say, "Look at that little fellow; that foot never grew in Paris!" This startled me, but most of all I was put out by the inquisitorial eyes of the policemen. At the corner of every street I met that stony eye fixed curiously upon me, and when I had passed on I felt it still following me and making my back creep. In short I was not comfortable. I walked on in this way for an hour or so, and then I got to a wide street planted with rows of young trees. There was so much noise there, so many people and carriages passing and repassing, that I was frightened and stopped.



"How shall I get through this?" I said to myself; "or how shall I find my way back? People will laugh if I ask for the steeple of St. Germain. I should be like a bell that has gone astray after the Easter blessing at Rome."

That I might have time to collect my wits, I stopped before some placards with announcements of the theatres, and tried to look like a man who is laying out his evening's amusement; but unfortunately, however interesting they might be in other ways, these advertisements gave no information about St. Germain's, and I ran a great risk of standing there for ever, when, suddenly, at my side appeared Jack! He was as much amazed as I was.

"What, you here, Daniel? Good heavens, how did you make your way here?"

"You see," said I carelessly, "I am taking a walk.

Good Jack looked at me with admiration.

"Why, you are a Parisian already," he said.

In the bottom of my heart I was overjoyed to see him, and I hooked myself on to his arm like a child, just as I took hold of my father's when he came to look for us on the boat at Lyons.

"But how fortunate that we met," said Jack. "The

marquis has lost his voice to-day, and as he could not dictate by signs he gave me a holiday ; so we will have a grand walk."

We set off to see the town, keeping close to one another, and proud to be walking together. Now that I had him with me, I was no longer afraid. I went along with my head high, as bold as a trumpeter in the Zouaves, laugh at me now who dare ! But one thing disturbed me ; I caught a compassionate look in Jack's eye now and then, and I did not dare to ask why.

At last he said,—

"Those are very nice goloshes of yours."

"Are they not ?" I said.

"Yes, very nice ;" then he added with a smile, "but all the same, the first money I have I'll buy you a pair of shoes to put inside them."

Poor dear Jack, he said it simply enough, but I was put out of countenance at once. All my shyness returned. Walking along that boulevard bathed in brilliant sunshine, I felt that I was a ridiculous figure in my goloshes, and in spite of all Jack could say I insisted on going home directly. We sat down close to the fire, and spent

the rest of the day twittering away like a couple of sparrows in the gutter. Towards evening there came a knock, it was a messenger with my trunk.

"Now then," said Jack, "we'll have a look at your wardrobe."

Lack-a-day, my wardrobe indeed! It was a pitiful but comical sight to watch Jack making the little inventory; he was on his knees before the trunk, taking the things out one by one.

"A dictionary, a neck-tie, another dictionary; if you had but some socks. Another great book. What's this? punishment-book? Ho, ho! let's see. Boucoyran, five hundred lines; Boucoyran, four hundred lines; Boucoyran, five hundred, five hundred, Boucoyran, Boucoyran. By Jove, you did not spare that Master Boucoyran. If I could only come upon a few shirts though, it would be more to the purpose."

At this point of the inventory, he broke into a cry of surprise.

"Mercy on me, Daniel, what's this, verses? do you write verses? Why did you never tell me about it in your letters, you rogue? Don't be afraid though, you know I respect the gentle art. I used to write poetry





I saw all this out of the corner of my eye without interrupting  
my reading.

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myself once. Don't you remember 'Religion, in twelve Cantos'? Come, let's see your verses."

"Oh please, no, Jack! Indeed, they are not worth reading."

"They are all just alike, these poets!" said Jack, laughing. "Come, sit down, and read me your verses; if you don't, I'll read them out myself, and you know how badly I read."

At that threat I began to read out. They were verses which I had made under the chestnut-trees while I was in charge of the pupils. Were they good or bad? I hardly remember, but I remember my feelings at reading them out. Think what it is to read out one's own poetry which no one had ever seen; and then the author of 'Religion, in twelve Cantos' was not an ordinary judge. Would he laugh at me? But as I read, the music of the rhythm carried me on, and my voice grew firm. Jack was sitting in the window listening with perfect gravity. Behind him the large red sun was setting, and making our window-panes blaze like fire. On the ridge of the roof a lean cat was looking at us, stretching itself out, and yawning like a loungee at the Comédie Française listening critically to a tragedy. I saw all this out of the

corner of my eye without interrupting my reading. Unexpected triumph! the moment I had done, Jack sprang enthusiastically from his seat.

"Oh Daniel, how beautiful!" cried he.

I looked up mistrustfully.

"Do you think so really?" said I.

"Splendid, old fellow, splendid! To think that you had all these riches in your trunk, and never told me a word. What were you thinking of!"

And he began walking up and down the room, gesticulating and talking to himself in a low tone.

Suddenly he stopped, and said with a solemn air,—

"There is no doubt about it, Daniel, you are a poet. A poet you must be, and make your livelihood in that way."

"Oh, Jack, but it is so difficult! especially to make a beginning. One earns so little."

"Pooh! I will earn for both of us, never fear."

"But our plan, Jack; the home we were to restore?"

"The home? Trust me for that. I feel myself able to restore the home by my own exertions. You shall make it illustrious; and think how proud our parents

will be to sit by the hearth which you have made famous !”

I made some objections, but Jack had an answer for each one. To say truth, I made but a feeble resistance ; his brotherly enthusiasm was conquering ; I began to believe in myself, and I felt the spirit of Lamartine pervading my whole being. On one point, however, Jack and I could not agree. He insisted that at five-and-thirty I should become a member of the Académie Française. I would not listen to such an idea. Stuff about your musty old Académie. It is as old and as out of fashion as the pyramids of Egypt.

“All the more reason for being a member of it,” insisted Jack. “It will bring a little young blood among all the old fogies of the Palais Mazarin. And then, just think, Daniel, how happy our mother will be.”

What could I say to that ? the name of our mother is an argument to which there is no reply. I see that I must resign myself to the green robe. Hurrah for the Académie Française ! If I find my colleagues too great bores, why I will do like Mérimée, and stay away from their meetings.

It had grown dark during these discussions, and a



merry chime sounded from the steeple, as if to celebrate the election of M. Daniel Eyssette, Academician.

"Come, we will go and get some dinner," said Jack ; and he took me to a little dairyman's shop in the Rue St. Benoît. Attached to it was a restaurant, which was much frequented by people who were not burdened with money ; and there was a table-d'hôte for the regular comers. We sat down in the first room ; there were a good many people dining there ; all were threadbare, all very hungry, and all scraping their plates without saying a word.

"They are almost all literary men," whispered Jack.

I could not help making certain melancholy reflections at this, but I kept them to myself for fear of throwing cold water on his enthusiasm. Our dinner was very gay. M. Eyssette (F.A.) displayed a vast deal of wit, and still more appetite. As soon as we had done we hastened back to our steeple, and while the Academician sat cross-legged in the window, Jack sat at the little table, buried in a calculation which seemed to cause him much anxiety. He bit his nails, moved uneasily in his chair, and at last suddenly exclaimed in triumph,—

"Bravo ! I have it !"

"Have what, Jack?"

"I have made out our budget, my boy, and I can assure you it was no easy matter. Sixty francs a month for two is little enough."

"Sixty! I thought the marquis gave you a hundred?"

"Yes, but then forty of that go to our mother for the home that is to be. Now see here. Lodging, fifteen francs; not much to be sure, but I make my bed myself, and do my room."

"Oh, I will do that, Jack!"

"Not a bit of it; that wouldn't be proper for an F.A. But to go on. Lodging, fifteen; coal, five. Only five, because I will get it myself from the stores every month. That leaves forty. Let us say thirty for your food. You will dine at that place where we were to-day. It costs fifteen sous without dessert, and you saw it was not so bad; that leaves five sous for your breakfast; will that be enough?"

"I should think so!"

"Very well, then we have ten francs left. Seven for laundry. What a pity I have not time to go to the boats myself! Then there are three, which I put thus. Thirty sous for my breakfasts. Nonsense. I get a right

good dinner every day, so I don't want a substantial breakfast as you do. The thirty sous over I leave for little odds and ends, postage stamps, 'unforeseen expenses' in short. There, don't you call that well done?"

And Jack began to dance about the room ; suddenly he stopped with an air of consternation.

"I must do it all over again, I forgot one thing."

"What?"

"Candles! how can you work in the evening if you have no candles? That is an absolute necessity; and it will be at least five francs a month. Could we strike off anything? The money for home is sacred; we won't touch that on any pretext. By Jove, I have it! We are just at March, and that means spring, and warmth, and sun."

"Well, Jack?"

"Well, Daniel? when we have sun, we don't want fire; so the five francs for coal will stand for five francs for candles, and there we are. Upon my word, I ought to have been minister of finance! What do you say to that? The budget is all right this time, I don't think we have forgotten anything. To be sure there is the question of clothes and boots, but I know what I will do. I have all

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my evenings from eight o'clock, and I will get a place as book-keeper in some little shop. I am sure our good friend Pierrotte will find that for me easily."

"Oh, by-the-bye, Jack, you and he are great friends; do you go there often?"

"Yes, very often, we have music there in the evenings."

"He is a musician then?"

"No—his daughter."

"His daughter! So there's a daughter? And what is Mademoiselle Pierrotte like?"

"Oh, you ask too many questions all at once, Daniel. Some other day I'll tell you all about her; it is late now, let us go to bed."

And to cover his embarrassment, Jack began to make the bed as carefully and as deftly as if he was an old maid.

It was a single iron bedstead, just like the one we used to sleep in when we were boys at Lyons.

"Do you remember our little bed in the Rue Lanterne, Jack, when we used to read secretly, and when father used to call out from his bed in his loudest voice, 'Put out the candle, or I will get up?'"

Yes, Jack remembered that, and a great many other

things. We went on from one thing to another till midnight struck, and we were not thinking of sleep.

"Come, good night," said Jack resolutely; but five minutes after I heard him shaking with laughter under his blanket.

"What are you laughing at, Jack?"

"I am laughing at Abbé Micou at the chorister school. Do you recollect him?"

"To be sure, a good old man, but how odd!" And we set off laughing and talking nonsense. This time I was the sensible one, and I said, "Now we must go to sleep."

But the next moment I began again,—

"And don't you remember Rouget! Rouget at the mills, my man Friday you know?"

Fresh bursts of laughter and more chat followed.

Suddenly a thundering thump shook the partition wall at my side of the bed; we were in consternation.

"That's the White Cuckoo," whispered Jack.

"Cuckoo! what's that?"

"Hush, not so loud, she's our next door neighbour: she is angry, no doubt, because we are keeping her awake."

"I say, Jack, what an odd name! Is she young?"

"You may judge for yourself. You'll meet her some day on the stairs, but we must go to sleep at once, or we shall hear more from her."

Jack blew out the candle, and the future Academician went to sleep on his brother's shoulder as if he had been a child of ten years old.





## CHAPTER IV.

THE LADY ON THE FIRST FLOOR.—THE WHITE CUCKOO.

EVERY time I pass by St. Germain des Prés, I look up at a little window in the roof, just at the corner of the church, and I feel a pang at my heart. That is the window of our old room, and to this very day I can fancy that the Daniel of those old days is still sitting up there at the table pushed close to the casement, and looking down with a commiserating smile at the saddened, bent figure of the Daniel of to-day.

The hours struck pleasantly when I used to hear them up there with my "Mother Jack." Can the old clock never strike one of those hours of youth and courage again? Never, no never again for me. I was so happy then, I worked so bravely!

We used to get up at daylight. Jack set about the housework at once; he fetched water, swept the room, set my table; he would not allow me to put a finger to anything. I used to say, "Jack, do let me help!" but he always laughed.

"What are you thinking of, Daniel? How about the lady on the first floor?"

This fine-sounding allusion used to shut my mouth, and for this reason. In the early days of our life together, it was I who used to go down to the yard for water. At a later hour in the day perhaps I would not have ventured; but at that hour of the morning every one but ourselves was asleep, so that there was no fear of meeting any one as I went down with the pitcher in my hand. So I used to go as soon as I was up, and only half-dressed. The yard was empty too. Sometimes, indeed, there would be a man in a red stable-jacket cleaning his harness at the pump; he was the coachman of the lady on the first



floor, a creole who lived in very good style, and who was an object of much consideration in the house. The presence of that man was enough to make me feel uncomfortable ; if he was there, I pumped as fast as I could, and hurried upstairs with my pitcher only half full. Once I had got to the top I felt how silly I was, but that did not prevent my being just as silly next day, if I spied the red jacket in the yard. One day, when I had had the luck to miss it, as I was going up gaily with my pitcher quite full, whom should I meet but the lady of the first floor coming down from her apartment. She had a stately, proud step, and was slowly descending the stairs in a cloud of silken drapery, her eyes fixed on a book. At the first glance I thought her very lovely, though a little too pale ; but the thing that struck me was a white scar just below her lip. As she passed she raised her eyes. I was against the wall, jug in hand, and as red as fire. I was horrified at being caught thus like a water-carrier, my hair unbrushed, no collar on, and in my shirt-sleeves. I wished the wall would open and hide me. The beautiful lady looked full in my face like a queen for a moment, then, with an indulgent smile, she passed on. When I got to our room I was mad with



I was against the wall, jug in hand, and as red as fire.

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shame and vexation. I related my adventure to Jack, who laughed heartily at my vanity ; but next day he took the pitcher, without saying a word, and went down. From that out he went down every day, and though I felt full of remorse, I let him do it, so unconquerable was my dread of meeting the lady again ! The house-work done, Jack went off to his marquis, and I saw him no more till evening. I spent the whole day alone with my muse, or what I called my muse. My table was close to the open window, and from morning to night I sat there stringing rhymes. Every now and then a sparrow would come to drink in the roof-gutter just outside, watch me pertly for a moment, and then fly off to tell the other sparrows what I was doing, and presently I heard the patter of their little hoppings on the tiles.

The bells were my visitors too. I was always glad when their voices floated in at the open window and filled the room with music. Sometimes it was a joyous chime in triplets of semiquavers, sometimes a deep knell whose single notes fell slowly like heavy tears. Then there was the angelus at noon, like an archangel in robes of sunlight, which filled my room with splen-

dour ; then the evening angelus, like the angel of repentance, dropping soft sadness from his shadowy wings in the moonlight.

The muse, the birds, the bells, nobody else. I knew no one, no one knew me. When I went to my dinner, I always took care to choose a little table apart from every one else ; I ate as fast as I could, took my hat, and came back at once. I never took a walk, never went anywhere, not even to hear the band in the Luxembourg gardens. The morbid shyness which I had inherited from my mother was not diminished by the shabbiness of my clothes, and in particular by the unlucky goloshes, which I was still wearing for lack of anything else. I would willingly never have come down from my steeple. I dreaded going down the street to the restaurant. Only sometimes, when in the warm, balmy evening of a Parisian spring I used to meet joyous troops of students going along arm-in-arm, smoking their cigars or pipes, my thoughts were pleasantly stirred, I could scarcely tell why. At such times I rushed back to my room, lit my candle, and worked like a lion till Jack came home. When he came all was changed. Our room was gay, full of animation and

noise; we sang, and laughed, and asked the news. "Did you do a good bit to-day?" Jack would say; "how did the poem get on?" And then he would tell me some curious story or fresh trait of his eccentric master. (Sometimes he drew from his pocket dainties which he had saved for me from dessert, watching me with delight as I munched them.) Presently, however, I went back to my table and resumed my writing; and then Jack, after a couple of turns in the room, would go out, saying, "Well, as you are working, I think I will just go 'there' for a couple of minutes." "There" meant Pierrotte's, and the reader must be slow indeed if he has not discovered why Jack talked about "there." I had guessed it from the first time when I saw him smooth his hair, and tie his cravat three or four times at the glass before he went; but I did not want to make him feel awkward, so I said nothing, but laughed to myself.

When he was gone my pen went fast; all around me was sunk in silence, no more visits from birds or bells.

About nine o'clock every night a footstep was heard on the little wooden stairs, which were a continuation of

the great staircase. This was our neighbour the white cuckoo.

Who could this mysterious neighbour be? I never could find out, for if I asked Jack about her, all I got was, "What! you have not met our grand neighbour yet?" I thought to myself she must be somebody wonderfully discreet and quiet. One day, when Jack had just brought up the water, he came in looking very mysterious and whispered, "Quick, if you want to see our neighbour, now's your time!" With one bound I was on the landing-place, the door of the next room was wide open, and I saw—what a vision! The room was completely bare except for a mattress on the floor, and on this mattress sat a very large negress, the whites of her great eyes looking like mother-of-pearl, and with a mop of short, woolly hair frizzled just like the fleece of a black sheep; her dress was a white jacket and an old red petticoat. This was the white cuckoo.

"Well," said Jack, as I returned, "what do you think of her?"

My blank look made him burst out laughing. I had the sense to take it in good part, and there we stood opposite to one another, laughing with all our might. I

had not quite closed our door, and before we were able to speak from laughing, a great black head popped in, crying,—

“White man laugh at nigger—not good!” and it was gone as quickly as it came.

I am afraid we laughed louder than before. When we could speak, Jack told me that the negress was servant to the lady of the first floor.

About this time Jack found a place as book-keeper at an ironmonger's, for evening work ; he was to go there straight from the marquis's. The dear old boy was half-glad, half-sad, as he told me the news.

“But what will you do about going ‘there?’” I said abruptly. I saw tears in his eyes as he replied,—

“I will go on Sundays.”

And from thenceforward he went only on Sundays, but I am sure it cost him a great deal.

What was the attraction “there” like ? I should have liked to know very much, but he never proposed taking me with him, and I was too proud to ask him to do so. How could I go, besides, in my goloshes ?

One Sunday, however, just as he was going out, he said, with a good deal of embarrassment,—



"Wouldn't you like to go with me, Daniel? I am sure they would be very glad to see you."

"My dear Jack, you are joking."

"Yes, yes, I know Pierrotte's room is not exactly the place for a poet."

"Oh, it's not that, Jack, I meant only on account of my dress, you know."

"True enough, I never thought of it."

He seemed delighted at having a good reason for not taking me, and away he went. But scarcely had he got to the bottom of the stairs, when he turned about and ran up again, and came in out of breath, saying,—

"Daniel, if you had a pair of boots and a presentable coat, would you have come to Pierrotte's?"

"Why not?"

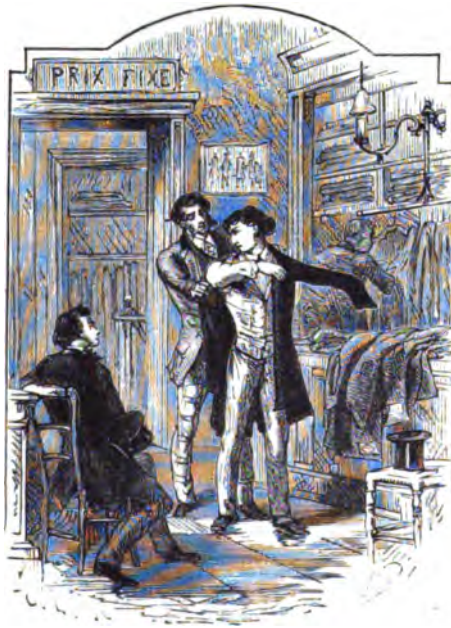
"Come along, then; I will buy you what you want, and then we will go there."

I stared at him.

"It's all right," continued he, "it is the end of the month, and I have some money; come along!"

The idea of having new clothes was so agreeable to me that I did not remark his agitation, nor the unusual

tone of his voice. I recollected it long afterwards. But at the moment I embraced him, and we set off to the Palais Royal, where I was fresh rigged at a ready-made clothes' shop.





## CHAPTER V.

### PIERROTTE'S STORY.

IF any one had told Pierrotte when he was twenty that one day he would succeed M. Lalouette in the glass and china business, have two hundred thousand francs at his banker's (Pierrotte with a banker!), and be master of a fine shop in the Passage du Saumon, he would indeed have been astounded.

At twenty years of age Pierrotte had never been out of his own village, wore great clogs of Cévennes deal, could

not speak a word of French, and was earning a hundred crowns a year by rearing silkworms. He was a thoroughly good fellow, the best dancer of hornpipe in the country, never without a laugh or a song in his mouth, a good companion, in short, but always orderly and within bounds. Like all the lads of his age, he had a sweetheart, for whom he used to wait at the church door every Sunday evening when vespers were over, and then go to dance gavottes with her under the mulberry-trees. Berta, his sweetheart, was also employed about the silkworms; she was an orphan like himself, a fine, tall, handsome girl of eighteen. She could read and write very well, which in the villages of the Cévennes is almost as rare as a marriage portion. Very proud of his Berta, Pierrotte was only waiting to marry her till the conscription had been drawn; but when the lots were drawn the poor Cévenol, though he had thrice dipped his fingers in holy water, putting his hand into the urn, drew No. 4. His fate was sealed, he must go! They were in despair, but happily Madame Eyssette, who had been nursed and almost brought up by Pierrotte's mother, came to the rescue of her foster-brother, and lent him two thousand francs to pay a substitute. The Eyssettes were rich

people in those days. The happy Pierrotte did not go for a soldier, but stayed at home and married his Berta. But the worthy fellow and his wife were determined to pay their debt to their benefactress, and as this was clearly impossible if they remained in the village, they bravely made up their minds to go to Paris to seek their fortunes. Nothing was heard of the mountaineer for a year; but one fine day Madame Eyssette received a touching letter, signed, "Pierrotte and his wife," containing three hundred francs, the fruits, the letter said, of their first savings. The second year came, another letter from "Pierrotte and his wife," with five hundred francs. The third year nothing came, no doubt things were not so prosperous with him. The fourth year brought a letter enclosing the balance of the whole sum, twelve hundred francs, with thanks and blessings for the Eyssette family. This letter unfortunately arrived just at the time when the mill was sold, and when everything about us was upset; we were on the eve of leaving our home and country. In her distress, Madame Eyssette forgot to answer the letter, and from that time we heard no more of Pierrotte and his wife till the day when Jack found the worthy Cévenol, alas! without

his Berta, settled as book-keeper to the old and respectable house of Lalouette. Thoroughly prosaic, but very touching was the story of his fortunes. When the young couple got to Paris, the wife bravely went to work as a charwoman. His first place was at this very Lalouette's. The Lalouettes were rich tradespeople, but very eccentric, and very close ; they would never keep a clerk or a maid-servant, because, as they said, they chose to do everything for themselves. ("Sir," old Lalouette used to say, "till I was fifty I made my own breeches.") When they came to old age, however, they determined to allow themselves the stupendous luxury of a charwoman at twelve francs a month. Heaven knows those twelve francs were hardly earned ! There was the shop to do out, and the back shop, and the apartment on the fourth floor, and the two buckets to fill with water for the kitchen every morning. None but a peasant from the mountains would have thought of accepting such hard terms, but this girl from the Cévennes was young and active, accustomed to work, and as strong as a young bull ; she got through this heavy work before you could look round, and all the time she delighted the old people by her merry laugh, which was well worth twelve

francs without more. By dint of good-humour and heartiness the brave girl completely won the hearts of her master and mistress ; they began to talk to her, to draw her out, and at last one fine day—the driest hearts sometimes bloom suddenly into liberality—old Lalouette, of his own accord and unsolicited, offered to lend a little money to Pierrotte to set him up in the business he had a fancy for. His fancy was this : he bought an old pony and a cart, and went about Paris from one end to the other, crying with the full strength of his lungs,—

“Any odds and ends to get rid of?”

Our cunning Cévenol did not sell, he bought. What? Everything, old iron, waste paper, old bottles, old pieces of furniture not worth mending, frippery that no old clothes' shop would buy ; everything that is of no value which the owners keep from habit or from carelessness, or because they do not know what to do with it ; because they cannot get rid of it. Pierrotte was not above taking anything, he bought everything, or rather accepted it, for generally people were only glad to get rid of their rubbish.

The Cévenol was very popular in the Quartier Mont-

martre. After the manner of all itinerant vendors who push their way through the crowded traffic and racket of the streets, he had adopted a sort of chant, which was soon known to all the housewives of the quarter. First of all was his shout, "Any odds and en—ds to get ri—d of!" then came a long discourse in a minor key to his pony, his "Anastagille," as he called her (he meant to say Anastasia). "Come up, Anastagille! come up, old girl!" and the good animal followed him along, keeping as close to the foot-way as possible, while from every house came the cry, "Hi! hi! Anastagille!" You should see how fast the cart filled; and when it was quite full, Pierrotte and Anastagille went off with their cargo to a wholesale ragman, who paid handsomely for all these "odds and en—ds," which had been bought for little or nothing. Pierrotte did not make a fortune by this singular trade; but he more than earned his livelihood. At the end of the first year he sent the three hundred francs to "Mademoiselle," for so he was accustomed to call the lady when she was a girl, and he could never bring himself to call her anything else, even when she became Madame Eyssette.

The third year was a bad one; it was the year of the



Revolution of 1830. In vain he shouted "Odds and ends to get rid of!" The Parisians were deaf to Pierrotte's cry, and though he cried till he was hoarse, his cart remained empty. To complete his ill luck, Anastagille died. It was then that old Lalouette, finding that he could no longer do everything without assistance, offered to take Pierrotte as shop-boy. He joyfully accepted the proposal, but did not long occupy this humble post. Every evening since his arrival at Paris his wife had given him reading and writing lessons. He could already write a tolerably good letter and express himself in French. When he was engaged by Lalouette he joined an adult class in the evening to study arithmetic, and got on so well that at the end of some months he was able to keep Lalouette's books and to supply Madame Lalouette's place behind the counter. The old man's sight was failing, and the old woman's legs were no longer as active as her mind. About this time Made-moiselle Pierrotte made her appearance in the world, and the prosperity of the Pierrottes went on increasing. Presently he had a share in Lalouette's business, and before long Lalouette, having completely lost his sight, retired, and made over everything to Pierrotte

for a sum which he was to pay by yearly instalments.

Left free to follow out his own ideas, Pierrotte extended the business so much that in three years he paid off Lalouette, found himself free from all encumbrance, and master of a fine shop with a very large connexion. But just as he had attained this happy position, as if she had only waited till he could do without her, his brave good Berta fell sick and died of exhaustion.

This was Pierrotte's story, as told me by Jack on our way to the Passage du Saumon. As the way was long, I knew all about the good Cévenol before we reached his house. I knew that he had two idols which it was sacrilege to touch, his daughter and M. Lalouette. I knew that he was rather given to prosing, and was rather wearisome, because he spoke very slowly, casting about for words, stammered a good deal, and never said three words without adding, "I may well say." The cause of this was that he had never thoroughly mastered French. He thought in his Languedoc dialect, and used to translate what he was going to say into French. When he pronounced his formula, "I may well say," it was to gain time for this little operation in his mind. As Jack

said, it was not talking, it was translating. As for Made-moiselle Pierrotte, all I could learn about her was that she was sixteen, and that her name was Camille ; when it came to talking about her, Jack was as mute as a fish.

We reached the shop about nine o'clock, just as they were closing. At the half-open door there was a formidable heap of shutters, iron bars and bolts, all the apparatus, in short, for shutting-up shop. The gas was turned off, and all the wareroom was in darkness except the cashier's desk, where a porcelain lamp was shedding its light over piles of money and a red, jolly face. From the parlour behind the shop came the notes of a flute.

"Good evening, Pierrotte," said Jack, marching up to the desk. I was beside him, and the light fell on my face. Pierrotte was employed putting the day's receipts into his cash-box ; he raised his eyes at Jack's voice, but when his glance fell on me, he gave a cry, clasped his hands, and stayed, with his mouth wide open, staring at me. "Well !" said Jack triumphantly ; "didn't I tell you ?"

"Good gracious !" murmured Pierrotte, "why, I really do think—I may well say—I really think I see her !"

"Especially about the eyes, Pierrotte; look at his eyes," said Jack.

"And the chin, sir! the chin with a dimple in it," replied Pierrotte, raising the shade of the lamp, the better to see me.

I could not make them out. There they were looking at me, winking away, making signs to each other. Suddenly Pierrotte came down from his desk and came towards me with open arms.

"By your leave, Master Daniel, I must embrace you, sir,—I may well say—it is mademoiselle herself."

Now I understood all. At that time I was very like my mother, and Pierrotte, who had not seen her since she was "Mademoiselle" five-and-twenty years ago, was greatly struck by the likeness. The good fellow could not leave off shaking my hand, looking into my face with his eyes full of tears, and he began talking of my mother, of the two thousand francs, then of his Berta, his Camille, his Anastagille, and all at such length and with so many "I may well say," that I think we should have been standing there to this day, if Jack had not said in an impatient tone,—

"But the cash-box, Pierrotte?"

Pierrotte pulled up short, with a little confusion at having talked so much.

"You are right, sir, and my little girl upstairs, she is longing, I may well say, she is longing to see Master Daniel. Please to walk upstairs. I'll just shut up my cash-box—I may well—I'll follow you directly."

Jack did not wait for another word ; he took me by the arm, and walked me off to the parlour behind the shop from whence issued the sounds of the flute.

The wareroom was extensive and well filled. It was like the palace of the Porcelain Fairy seen by night. The fish-tail lights of one or two half-turned-down gas burners leapt up fitfully as if weary of their evening's work, and shone on the bulging sides of soup tureens and long ranges of carafes, opalescent globes of lamps, on the ruddy gold of Bohemian glass, on great cut crystal goblets, on rows of plates piled as high as the ceiling. We passed by these and through the parlour, where, seated on a sofa, a young man, with long fair hair, was playing a melancholy air on the flute. As we passed him, Jack said "Good evening," very dryly ; the young man with fair hair replied by an equally dry

"Toot toot," which I presume is the way flutes express "Good evening" when they are out of humour.

"That's the clerk," said Jack, when we were on the staircase; "he wearies us to death with his eternal flute. You don't like the flute, do you, Daniel?"

I had a mind to ask him whether any one in particular in the house did like it, but I was afraid of hurting him, so I replied quite gravely, "No, Jack, I do not."

Pierrotte's apartment was in the same house as the shop, on the fourth floor. Mademoiselle Camille lived upstairs, and never saw her father except at meals.

"Oh, you will see it is all on the footing of a great house," said Jack, as we went up. "Camille has a companion, a widow lady, a Madame Tribu, who never leaves her. I don't know much about her, but Pierrotte does, and says she is a lady of great merit. Here we are; ring, Daniel."

I rang; the door was opened by a tall woman from the Cévennes, who smiled at Jack as an old acquaintance, and showed us to the drawing-room.

Mademoiselle Pierrotte was at the piano; two stout old ladies, Madame Lalouette and the lady of great merit, were playing cards in a corner of the room. Every

one rose when we were announced: there was a moment's bustle, and then, presentations having been made and greetings exchanged, Jack begged Camille—he called her Camille—to sit down again to the piano, and the lady of great merit took advantage of his request to return to her game of cards with Madame Lalouette. Jack and I sat one on each side of Mademoiselle Pierrotte, who laughed and talked to us while her small fingers ran up and down the notes. She was not a beauty; she had a pretty red-and-white complexion, a small ear, and fine hair, but her cheeks were too plump and too florid; she had red hands, and her manners were those of a boarding-school girl in the holidays. In short, she was Pierrotte's own daughter, a mountain flower grown under glass in the arcade. Such, at least, was my first impression, but suddenly, at something I said to her, she raised her eyes for the first time, and turned them slowly on me.

As if by magic, the boarding-school girl disappeared, and I saw nothing but her eyes, great, blue, dazzling eyes which, in spite of the difference of colour, recalled to my mind the black eyes of my little adopted sister.

I was in a dream. I felt inclined to exclaim, "Is it



I saw nothing but her eyes.

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you, dear black eyes ? You, at once so like and yet so changed ?” They were exactly alike, there was no mistaking them. The same eye-lashes, the same brilliancy, the same childlike grace, the same hidden fire.

I was going to make an exclamation, when close by, almost at my ear, I heard a noise like a mouse nibbling at something. I looked round, and saw in an easy chair, close to the piano, a person whom I had not hitherto observed. It was a pallid old man, with a head like a bird, a retreating forehead, and round, meaningless eyes, too far from his nose, and almost where his temples ought to be. If it had not been for a lump of sugar in his hand, at which he pecked now and then, he might have been supposed to be asleep. A little startled by this apparition, I made a low bow to him, which he did not return.

“He did not see you,” whispered Jack ; “he is blind. It is M. Lalouette.”

I turned from the old man with the birdlike head, to look once more at the blue eyes that seemed black ; but, alas ! the spell was broken ; there was again only the little ordinary girl on the music-stool. At this moment the door opened, and Pierrotte came in noisily, followed

by the man with the flute. When Jack saw the latter he shot a thundering look at him, which would have been enough to stun a buffalo, but it failed of its effect, for the flut  -player did not even quail under it.

"Well, my little girl," said the C  venol, giving his daughter a hearty kiss on both cheeks, "are you satisfied? So you have got Master Daniel; how do you like him? He is not amiss, I may well say; he is the very image of mademoiselle."

And the worthy fellow began a repetition of the scene in the shop, and trotted me out into the middle of the room that every one might see mademoiselle's eyes, and mademoiselle's nose, and chin with a dimple. This exhibition drove me wild. Madame Lalouette and the lady of great merit broke off their game, and lay back in their armchairs, examining me as coolly as possible, discussing me just as if I was a barn-door fowl in the market.

Jack put an end to my torture by asking Mademoiselle Pierrotte to play us something.

"By all means!" cried the flute-player, darting forward with his flute in readiness.

"No, no!" cried Jack, "not the flute! not a duet!"

On which the flute-player gave him a vicious look as venomous as a Carib's arrow ; but Jack did not flinch, but again cried, "No, no flute !" And he had the best of it, for Mademoiselle Pierrotte played without any accompaniment one of those well-known tremolos called *Rêveries de Rosellen*. While she was playing Pierrotte wept with joy, Jack was in heaven, the flute-player stood in gloomy silence, with the flute at his lips, beating time with his shoulders, and no doubt piping away internally.

When the *Rêverie* was finished, Mademoiselle Pierrotte turned to me, and said, without raising her eyes, "May we not hear you now, M. Daniel ? I know you are a poet."

"And a very good poet too !" cried that inconsiderate Jack.

It will easily be believed that I had no mind to recite verses before this assembly of Amalekites, so I carelessly answered, "Excuse me this evening, mademoiselle, I have not brought my lyre."

"Don't forget it next time," said good Pierrotte, taking the metaphor quite literally.

The poor man absolutely believed that I had a real lyre, and played on it as his clerk did on the flute Jack

was right when he told me he was taking me into a queer sort of society. At eleven o'clock tea was served. Mademoiselle Pierrotte went about smilingly, handing the sugar, pouring in the cream with her little finger stuck out. I then perceived that there were in her two beings perfectly distinct from each other ; one a commonplace little girl in flat braids, just fit to preside in the shop-parlour of old Lalouette ; the other being spoke from the soft velvety depths of the blue eyes, whose look seemed to transfigure all around them.

At last it was time to go. Madame Lalouette gave the signal by rolling up her husband in a great plaid, and carrying him off, swathed up like an old mummy. Pierrotte kept us a long time on the landing-place, making interminable speeches.

"Now, M. Daniel, now that you know the house, I hope we shall often see you ; we never have much company, but, I may well say, it is always select. Monsieur and Madame Lalouette to begin with, my old patrons you know ; Madame Tribu, a lady of great merit, with whom you can converse ; then my clerk, a good lad who plays the flute for us sometimes. You and he can play duets together, I may well say, and that will be very nice."

In vain I objected that I was very busy, and that I should not be able to come as often as I should like.

He laughed at that. "Oh, yes! busy; we know all about that, Master Daniel."

When we were at the foot of the stairs we heard his loud laugh still going on, as if it would shake the bannisters.

"Well, how do you like them?" said Jack, when we got outside.

"My dear fellow, M. Lalouette is an old horror; but Mademoiselle Camille is charming."

"Isn't she?" said poor Jack, so quickly that I could not help laughing.

That evening we walked for a long time on the quays. The reflection of myriads of stars quivered on the dark tranquil river, as it rolled beneath us. The cables of the large boats creaked as they slowly swung to the current. It was pleasant to stroll in the dark and listen to Jack.

"No, Daniel, I don't think she ever distinguished any one by her notice till this evening."

"How do you mean, Jack, 'till this evening'?"

“Mean? Why, that you please at first sight, Daniel, and that you might—”

Poor dear Jack! he said it in the saddest, most resigned voice. To comfort him I burst out laughing.





## CHAPTER VI.

### THE RED ROSE AND THE BLUE EYES.

I DID not go back to the Maison Lalouette for some time after my first visit.

Jack duly performed his Sunday pilgrimage, and every time he went he invented some still more fascinating knot for his cravat. Had I been a woman, I must have been touched by that cravat of Jack's and the endless variety of knots which he invented for it.

Every time before he went he said, "I am going



‘there,’ Daniel ; will you come ?” And my invariable answer was, “No, thank you, Jack, I must work ;” then he went off as fast as he could, and I stayed at my writing-table.

This was the fruit of a deliberate determination on my part not to go back to the Pierrottes. We went on thus for some time, and with the help of the muse I have no doubt I should have kept my resolution.

Jack had not spoken of the Pierrottes since the night we walked by the river, but I could see by his manner that things were not going on satisfactorily. When he came back at night on Sundays he was always in low spirits. I used to hear him sighing over and over again in the night ; if I asked him what was the matter, he replied shortly, “Nothing.” But the very tone in which he said this made me know that there was something the matter. Jack, good, kind, patient Jack, was sometimes out of humour now. Sometimes he looked at me as if we had fallen out. I knew by that that there was something very much astray ; but as he maintained an absolute silence, I could not venture to speak. One Sunday night, however, he came in more depressed than ever, and I determined he should make a clean breast of it.

"Come now, Jack," said I, taking his hand, "what is the matter with you? Are things not going right 'there'?"

"Well, no, they are all wrong," replied the poor lad in a dejected tone.

"But tell me about it. Will not Pierrotte have you for a son-in-law?"

"Oh, no, it's not Pierrotte, it is she. She does not care for me. She will never marry a man like me."

"What madness, Jack! How can you tell? Have you spoken to her? Did you tell her that she is in all your thoughts? I don't think you did. Eh? Well, then—"

"The one that is in her thoughts has not spoken—there was no need for him to speak."

"Oh, Jack, do you mean that the flute-player—?"

Jack seemed not to hear my question; then he repeated,—

"He who is in her thoughts has not spoken; and he has not played the flute either."

And this was all I could get from him.

There was very little sleep in our garret that night Jack stood all night long at the window, looking at the

stars and sighing. I was turning in my mind, "What if I went there, and saw how things stood really? After all, Jack may be mistaken. Mademoiselle Pierrotte cannot know the heart that is within that breast. Since Jack will not venture to speak, perhaps I might speak for him. Yes, I will go, I will speak, and we shall see."

Next day, without saying a word to Jack, I set off to carry out my fine scheme. Heaven is my witness, I went in all singleness of heart. I went for Jack, for Jack alone. Nevertheless, when I came in sight of the green shop-front, with its "Pierrotte, late Lalouette, Glass and China Warehouse," I felt a strange beating at my heart which ought to have warned me. I entered; there was no one in the shop. In the back parlour the flute-player was eating some repast, his instrument lay on the cloth beside him. "It is never possible that Camille can hesitate between that flute-player and my Jack," said I to myself as I went up. "Well, we shall see."

I found Pierrotte at table with his daughter and the lady of great merit. The look in those eyes which I had seen steal from its azure home was happily not there. An exclamation of surprise greeted me.

"Here he is at last," said the good Pierrotte, in his loudest voice. "I may well say—he, he is come to have coffee with us."

They made room for me beside Mademoiselle Pierrotte. The lady of great merit went and brought me a beautiful china cup all painted and gilt.

Mademoiselle Pierrotte looked quite charming that day. Just above her ear (they don't wear them there now-a-days) she had stuck a little rose, of the brightest, most vivid red, in her hair. My private belief is, that little red rose was bewitched, so much did it embellish her.

"Ho, ho! M. Daniel, so this is the way," said Pierrotte, with a jolly laugh. "So you won't come and see us?"

I tried to make an apology, and said something of my literary work.

"Oh, yes, we all know what the Quartier Latin is!" said the Cévenol, and he laughed still louder. Among his class the Quartier Latin means the place where there is least work and most amusement going on. True enough for some of its denizens, but a great mistake as to others. How they would have opened their eyes if they had known the anchorite life I led there! True, my work would not have ranked as real work in their eyes ;

not such work as would make them say, 'There is a man who never loses his time.'"

As we were finishing our coffee, a little air on the flute was heard from the foot of the stairs; it was the signal for Pierrotte; he went down, and the lady of great merit betook herself to the pantry.

The moment I was alone with the red rose, I thought, "Now is my time!" She seemed agitated. I began at once to speak of Jack. I began by saying how good, how brave, how true he was, how generous, how devoted. I told her of his devotion to me, of his watchful care, passing that of even a real parent. I told her how he provided for all my wants at the cost of what privation Heaven alone knew! But for him I should be still in that black prison-house of Sarlande, where I had undergone such misery and suffering.

I saw she was touched, a tear stole down her cheek. I honestly thought it was for Jack, and I said to myself, "It will all come right now." Thereupon I redoubled my eloquence, I told her of his changed spirits, of his sadness. Happy, thrice happy, would be the woman who—(here the red rose somehow detached itself from her hair and fell at my feet). At that moment I was





“This shall be for him—from you.”

seeking for some delicate way in which to hint to Camille that she might be that thrice happy woman ; the rose furnished me with what I wanted ; did I not say it was bewitched ? I picked it up quickly, and said, with my most subtle smile,—

“ This shall be for him—from you.”

“ For—him. If you like,” replied Mademoiselle Pierrotte, with a sigh ; but at that moment the blue eyes began to speak, and they looked at me as if something was compelling them to say, “ No, not for Jack, he is all very well ; but who asked you to talk about him to me ? ”

Perhaps I ought not to have picked it up, but I did. That night when Jack came in he found me writing away more assiduously than ever, and I let him think I had not been out all day. As ill-luck would have it, when I was taking off my coat, the red rose, which I had hidden under my waistcoat, dropped out, and fell at the foot of the bed (those fairies are always malicious !). Jack saw it ; he picked it up and looked at it for a long time. I don't know which was the reddest, the rose or I.

“ I know it,” he said slowly, “ it is from the rose-tree in the drawing-room window.”



He gave it back to me, saying, "She never gave me one!"

He said it so sadly that the tears came to my eyes. "Jack, my dear Jack! I swear to you that till this evening—"

He interrupted me gently.

"Don't make any excuses, Daniel. I knew all along that you were the one of us two that she would love if ever she knew you."

The poor lad began walking up and down the room, and I stood looking at him, still holding the rose.

"It is all as it should be," he continued presently. "I foresaw it all. I knew she would prefer you; that was the real reason why I did not take you there for so long. Forgive me for that. At last one day I resolved to make the trial, and I took you there. That very day I knew it was all over. Before five minutes had passed, without knowing it, without intending it, she gave you a look such as she had never given any one before. You saw it too. The proof is that you never went back there for a whole month; but that was of no avail. Every time I went there she would let me talk of nothing but you; but so simply, so confidently. It was torture to me. Now it is over, and so best."

All the time he never lost his gentle, resigned smile. Every word he said was at once pain and pleasure to me ; pain, because I saw his grief ; pleasure, because—because I was an abominable, selfish wretch. My poor Jack ! When he left off speaking, I went up to him, feeling very confused and very much ashamed, but still holding the rose in my hand.

“ Jack, won’t you love me any longer ? ”

He smiled, and clasped me to his heart, saying,—

“ Perhaps more than ever.”

And so it was. The story of the red rose made no change in his tenderness, not even in his manner. I am sure he was suffering ; but not a sigh, not a complaint betrayed it. He went on just as usual, and continued his visits to the Pierrottes on Sundays as before ; nothing was changed except that he left off the knot of his cravat. For the rest, calm and proud, working himself almost to death, he pursued his way steadily, the one aim of his life being the home he was to make for our parents. Oh, Jack ! Jack ! there never was an hour in your life when you were not a thousand times better than I !

As for me, I now spent all my time at Pierrotte’s. I

had won all hearts there. What blissful hours I spent in the little yellow drawing-room, without any of the remorse which on Jack's account I ought to have felt !

No doubt it was very imprudent to leave us always alone together in the little drawing-room. One day Camille, with more sense than I had, said,—

“You must speak to my father about your plans ; when will you do so, Daniel ?”

I promised that I would speak to him very shortly ; as soon as my poem was finished.





## CHAPTER VII.

### "YOU MUST SELL CHINA."

AT last the famous poem was completed. I finished it after four months' work, and I recollect that when I got to the last verse my hand was trembling with excitement, pride, pleasure, and importance, so that I could scarcely hold my pen.

It was an event in our garret. Jack for the occasion resumed his old work, and returned to his glue-pots and pasteboard. He bound a magnificent volume,

into which he insisted on copying my poem with his own hand, and, as he wrote, he exclaimed with admiration at every turn, stamping his foot enthusiastically. I confess I felt less confidence in my work ; Jack was too fond of me ; I distrusted his judgment, and I longed to submit my poem to some impartial criticism, to some one I could rely on. But I knew nobody. I had, however, made some acquaintance at the restaurant. Since we had been better off, I used to dine at the table-d'hôte in the inner room. There were a score or so of authors, painters, and architects there, or, to speak more correctly, of all these in embryo. The seed has sprung up now ; some of these young men have become famous, and when I read their names in the papers my heart is very sad, for I never made a name for myself. When I joined their table, all the young men welcomed me with open arms ; but as I was too shy to join in their discussions, I was soon forgotten, and was as much alone among them as I had been at my little table in the outer room ; I never spoke, I only listened.

Once a week we had at dinner a very famous poet, whose name I forget ; but among us he was always called Baghavat, after one of his poems to which he gave

this name. On the days he dined with us, we drank Bordeaux at eighteen sous, and at dessert the great Baghavat used to recite an Indian poem. Indian poems were his particular line. He had written "Lakgamana," and "Khatçala," and "Bhogiratha," and "Çudra," "Viçvamiitra," and "Cunocepa," but the finest of all was "Baghavat." When the poet recited his "Baghavat" you would have thought the ceiling would come down. The audience got on the table to cheer. At my right sat a little architect with a red nose, who began to whimper at the first verse, and wiped his eyes with my napkin all the way through to the end. I did not particularly care for "Baghavat." All those Indian poems were just like one another; there was always a lotus, and a condor, and an elephant, and a buffalo. Sometimes for variety *lotus* was spelt *lotos*; but except that they were all alike, and had neither passion, nor truth, nor imagination; rhymes were piled on rhymes. There was some colour, but no drawing; it was all mystification. That was my real opinion of "Baghavat." Perhaps I might have been a more lenient critic if I had ever been asked to recite some of my own verses; but I was not asked, and so I was merciless. I was not, how-

ever, alone in my opinion about the Hindoo poems. My left-hand neighbour was not smitten by them either. He was a singular-looking man, his clothes were greasy, threadbare, and shining ; his high forehead was bald, and he had a long beard streaked with not a few silvery threads. He was much the oldest, and much the most intelligent of our party. Like other men of great minds he was no talker. We all respected him, and said, " He is a man of great parts, he is a thinker." I had formed the highest opinion of him on account of the ironical grimace into which he screwed his mouth while he listened to the great Baghavat. I said to myself, " Here is a man of taste. Suppose I read my poem to him ? " One evening, as we were getting up from table, I called for some Cognac and asked him to drink a glass of brandy and water with me. He accepted it, as I knew he would. I soon turned the conversation on Baghavat, and I began by abusing lotus, and condors, and elephants. It was very bold, for any one knows that elephants are dangerous things to meddle with.

While I talked away, the Thinker poured himself out glass after glass, almost without uttering a word. From time to time he smiled and said, " Yes, yes," or nodded his







“Before you begin—what is your criterion?”

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head in token of approbation. Emboldened by this success, I now confessed to him that I myself had written a long poem, and that I was desirous of submitting it to his judgment. The Thinker gave a sort of grunt of acquiescence. Seeing him, as I thought, so favourably disposed, I drew my poem from my pocket. He quietly watched me open my manuscript, helped himself to a fifth glass of brandy and water, but just at the crowning moment he laid a long, lean hand like old ivory, on my sleeve,—

"One word, young man, before you begin. What is your criterion?"

I looked up uneasily.

"Your criterion, what is your criterion?" said the terrible Thinker, raising his voice.

Alas! I had none, had never thought of having one. He saw it in my wondering eye, and in my blushing confusion. The Thinker rose angrily.

"What! unhappy youth, you have no criterion? There's no good, then, in reading your poem to me. I know beforehand what it is worth!"

And he took up his hat and went out, rolling his eyes wildly.

Jack was very angry that evening when I told him my adventure.

"Your Thinker is a simpleton!" said he. "What's the use of a criterion? Have the Hindoos got one? Where is it to be had? Do you buy it? Has anybody ever seen a criterion shop? Fiddlesticks!"

Poor Jack had tears in his eyes at the thought of the affront I and my poem had suffered.

"Listen, Daniel," said he, at length. "As you are determined to read your poem, how would it be if you read it some Sunday, at Pierrotte's?"

"At Pierrotte's? Oh, Jack!"

"Why not? I grant you Pierrotte is no Phœnix, but he has good common sense. What do you say? Shall I propose it to him?"

I did not much relish the idea; there was only one in that house who could understand me, but then that one was worth a million. In short, I had such a longing to read out my poem that, after a little hesitation, I agreed to the proposal.

The very next day he spoke to Pierrotte, who, perceiving that by consenting he would please mademoiselle's sons, assented at once; so the "Adventures of a

Blue Butterfly" was sure of auditors at least, if not of readers.

The reading took place some days after.

When I had read to the last line, Jack started up to cry "Bravo!" but stopped short at seeing the bewildered air of the rest of the party.

Seriously, I think that if the White Horse of the Apocalypse had made an irruption into the yellow drawing-room, it would not have caused more astonishment than my "Blue Butterfly." All the Passajons and the Fongeroux, and all the other guests—for the whole posse of Pierrotte's friends, in full strength, had been invited—all agog at what they had been listening to, were staring at me with open mouths. The two Fouillerats were making signs at each other. Not a syllable fell from any one. You may imagine my feelings!

The venerable old Lalouette alone, after fiercely nibbling at his sugar, gave utterance to his opinion as follows :—

"I am very glad the Butterfly is killed, at any rate. I for one don't like butterflies."

Every one began to laugh, and a discussion ensued, which ended in Jack's whispering to me,—

"Never mind them. It really is a masterpiece. Camille thinks so too. The matter now is to find a publisher."

Accordingly, next morning I set off in quest of a publisher; but, as I now know, publishers are for the most part invisible to young poets. Every evening I came back disappointed, wearied, unstrung.

"Never say die!" Jack would say; "you will have better luck to-morrow." And on the morrow I set off again on a fresh round with my manuscript. Day by day I felt it becoming heavier, more awkward to carry. At first I brandished it gallantly in my hand, like a new silk umbrella, but at last I grew to be ashamed of it, and I buttoned my great coat carefully over it. A week passed thus. Sunday came again; Jack, according to custom, went to dine at Pierrotte's, but he went alone. I was so tired that I stayed in bed all day long. When he came home in the evening, he came and sat on the edge of the bed and gently scolded me.

"Now listen, Daniel; it is very wrong of you not to go 'there.'"

"I will go," I said, "when I have sold my poem."

"But you don't consider, Daniel, that may be some time off."

"On the contrary, I think of nothing else," was my reply. I saw a tear in Jack's eye. "Well, then, I will go to-morrow, I promise you."

I went next day to the Passage du Saumon. I should liked to have gone straight upstairs without seeing Pierrotte, but he was watching at the door, and I could not avoid him. I had nothing for it but to go in and sit down beside him in the cash-office. We were alone. I could hear the flute piping away in the background in a half-suppressed tone.

"M. Daniel," said the Cévenol, with a better command of language than I had ever heard from him, "I wish to ask you a very simple question, and I don't mean to beat about the bush. My little girl loves you. Do you love her really and truly?"

"With all my soul, Monsieur Pierrotte."

"Then it is all right. Now listen to what I have to propose to you. You are too young, and my little girl is too young to marry, say for three years. You have three years before you to make a position for yourself. I don't know whether you look to making your way

with your 'Blue Butterflies,' but I know very well what I should do in your place. I may well say, I should cut my stories adrift ; I would go into the old firm ' Pierrotte, late Lalouette,' learn my business in the china-shop, and work at it manfully, so that, in three years' time, when Pierrotte is getting old, he might find a partner as well as a son-in-law. Eh ? what do you say to that, my lad ? "

With that he gave me a nudge with his elbow, and laughed till I thought he would choke. Poor man ! he thought I should be overwhelmed with joy at his offer to let me sell china behind his counter. I had not courage to be angry, nor even to reply ; I was simply confounded.

The plates, the goblets, the vases, all seemed to dance before my eyes. On a stage opposite the desk was a group of daintily coloured china shepherds and shepherdesses, who all seemed to be shaking their crooks at me with a sly air, as much as to say, " Yes, you shall come and sell china." A little farther off, a row of hideous Chinese mandarins, in dark blue robes, wagged their old head-pieces, as if to say, " Yes, yes, yes ; you shall come and sell china."

For one who was fancying himself a Lamartine at the very least, all this was enough to turn him crazy. Pierrotte believed that emotion and joy had made me dumb.

"We will talk it over this evening," said he, giving me time to recover myself. "Now go upstairs to my little girl—I may well say—she must think you are a long time here."

I went upstairs and found her in the yellow drawing-room, working at a never-ending pair of slippers which she was embroidering, and the lady of great merit seated beside her. I hope my dear Camille will forgive me, but never did Mademoiselle Pierrotte appear to me so thoroughly Pierrotte as she did that day. Never did I feel so irritated at the way she had of drawing out her needle and counting her stitches out loud. With her little red fingers, her smooth round cheeks, her impassive air, she put me in mind of one of the china shepherdesses who had just told me so impertinently that I should sell china. Happily the blue eyes were there too, veiled and tender, but so unaffectedly glad to see me that I was quite touched. It did not last long Pierrotte followed me almost immediately.



The china-shop was triumphant!

Pierrotte was very gay, very talkative—quite intolerable with his “I may well say,” which rained faster than an April shower. The dinner was long and noisy. When we rose from table, Pierrotte took me aside to resume his proposal. I had had time to collect my thoughts, and I replied, with tolerable self-possession, that the thing required consideration, and that I would give him an answer in a month.

The Cévenol was doubtless very much surprised at the coolness with which I treated his offer, but he had the good taste to conceal it.

“Very well,” said he; “in a month, then.”

Nothing more was said, but the blow had been struck. All the rest of the evening that fatal “Yes, you shall sell china,” sounded in my ears, as if it was ringing the knell of my poetry.

When I went home that night, and told the whole story to Jack, his consternation was greater than mine.

“What! Daniel Eyssette, the author of the “Adventures of a Blue Butterfly,” to be a shopkeeper! I should like to see that!” said the good fellow. “Why, it’s as

if you proposed to Lamartine to sell matches, or to St. Beuve to retail hearth-brushes ! But you must not be angry with Pierrotte though ; he knows no better, poor man. When he hears the success of your book, and sees all the papers full of your name, he will change his tune."

"No doubt, Jack, but before the papers are full of my name, my book must be published, and I see plain enough that it will not be published ; do you ask why ? Why, because I can't find a publisher ; publishers are never at home for poets. Even the great Baghavat himself was obliged to publish at his own expense."

"Very well, we will do the same," said Jack, with a thump on the table ; "at our own expense."

I looked at him with amazement. "At our own expense, Jack ?"

"Yes, my boy, just that. See here ; the marquis at this moment is printing the first volume of his memoirs. I see his printer every day. It is C——, the red-nosed Alsatian, who looks so good-natured. I am certain he will give us credit ; we will pay him by degrees as your book sells. So that's settled ; to-morrow I will talk to him about it."

Next day Jack did actually go to the printer's, and came back in triumph.

"It's all right!" he cried; "your book will be in the press to-morrow. The expense will be nine hundred francs, a mere trifle! I will draw bills for three hundred francs, payable at three months. Now follow me carefully. We print a thousand copies at three francs each, that makes three thousand francs for your book—you understand, three thousand francs. Out of that we pay the printer; and there will be the bookseller's profit of one franc on each volume sold, and the advertising. That will leave us a profit of eleven hundred francs. It's as clear as daylight. Not so bad for a first work, eh?"

I should think not indeed! No more humbly waiting at the publishers' doors; and eleven hundred francs to lay by for the home to be. How merry we were that day in our steeple; what plans we made, what dreams we talked of! And on the following days how pleasant every little detail was; how pleasant to go to the printer's to correct the proofs, to discuss the colour of the binding, to see the sheets wet from the press covered with my own thoughts in print; to run three

or four times to the binder's, and at last come out with a first copy, which I opened tremblingly but triumphantly with the tips of my fingers! Can anything in the world be more exquisite?

The first copy of "The Adventures of a Blue Butterfly: a Pastoral Comedy," belonged of right to Camille. I took it to her in the evening, and Jack went with me to share my triumph. Exultant and radiant we made our entry into the yellow drawing-room. The whole party was assembled there.

"M. Pierrotte," said I, "allow me to present my first work to Camille;" and I put my volume into the little hand which was trembling with pleasure. Oh, if you could have seen the "Thank you!" which beamed from the blue eyes, and how they sparkled as they read my name on the cover! Pierrotte was less enthusiastic. I heard him ask Jack how much a volume like that would bring in. "Eleven hundred francs," said Jack manfully. They talked on for some time in a low voice, but I did not pay any attention to them. I was drinking in the ecstasy of seeing the blue eyes, with their long silken eye-lashes, fastened on the pages of my book, and then look up to mine in admiration. My

own book, and the blue eyes ; and I owed it all to Jack.

On our way home that night, we strolled through the arcades of the Odéon, to see how the " Pastoral Comedy " would look in the booksellers' windows.

" Wait for me a moment," said Jack, " I am going to see how many have been sold."

I walked up and down, eyeing a certain green cover with a network of black lines, which was displayed in the middle of the shop-front.

Jack came back in a minute, pale with emotion.

" They have sold one already ; a good augury !"

I pressed his hand in silence, I was too much agitated to speak. I said to myself, " Some one in Paris has laid out three francs on that production of my brain, he is reading it, judging of it now. How I wish I knew that some one !"

The following morning I was breakfasting at the table-d'hôte side by side with the fierce Thinker, when Jack rushed into the room quite out of breath.

" Great news !" cried he, dragging me outside. " I am going away at seven this evening with the marquis. We are going to Nice, to see his sister, who is ill there ;

perhaps we may be a long time away. Don't be uneasy, the marquis has doubled my salary ; I shall be able to send you a hundred francs a month. Well, what is it ? you are as white as a sheet. Come, Daniel, don't be a baby ; go back again to your breakfast, and drink a half-bottle of Bordeaux to give you heart. I must run and say good-bye to Pierrotte, and see the printer, and send the advertisements to the papers. I have not a moment ; be sure to be home at five o'clock !

I watched him hurrying down the Rue St. Benoît, then I turned back into the restaurant, but I could neither eat nor drink ; the Thinker drank the Bordeaux. The thought that in a few hours Jack, "my mother Jack," would be far away, gave me a qualm. I tried to think of my book, of the blue eyes, but nothing could divert my mind from the thought that Jack was going away, that I should be left alone in Paris, responsible for all I did.

He joined me at the appointed hour ; though much moved himself, he assumed an air of the greatest cheerfulness, and to the last moment he gave me fresh proofs of his generosity, and of his affection for me. He thought of nothing but me, my life and my comfort.

Under pretence of packing his trunk, he turned over all my wardrobe.

"See, Daniel, your shirts are here on this side, your pocket-handkerchiefs here, behind the collars."

"But, oh, Jack, you are filling my press, not your own trunk!"

When all was ready, we sent for a cab to take us to the station. All the way Jack was giving me all sorts of advice.

"Mind you write often. Send me all the articles that appear about the book, especially Gustave Planche's. I will make a bound album, and I will paste them all into it. It shall be the Golden Book of the family. Don't forget that the laundress comes on Thursday, and, above all, don't be dazzled by success. It is clear that the book will be very successful, and you know that's a dangerous thing in Paris. But most of all, my Daniel, I ask you to go often 'there,' and don't do anything to make Mademoiselle Pierrotte unhappy."

Just then we were passing the Jardin des Plantes.

"Do you remember our passing this one night five months ago? There is some difference between the Daniel of then, and what you are now; you have got on indeed in these few months!"

My poor Jack devoutly believed I had got on, and I, poor simpleton that I was, thought so too!

We arrived at the station; the marquis was already there. I saw the funny little man at a distance, with his head just like a white hedgehog, skipping up and down in the waiting-room.

"Quick, quick!" cried Jack. "Good-bye!" and, taking my face between his hands, he kissed me with all his might three or four times, and ran to join his chief. As I watched the train disappear, I felt a strange sensation. I seemed to become all at once smaller, more insignificant, more of a boy; it was as if my brother had carried away the very marrow of my bones, my strength, my courage, and half my stature. I was frightened by the crowd around me. I had become little What-d'ye-call-'em over again. It was getting dusk. Slowly, by the longest way and by the most deserted quays, I sought my steeple. The idea of being in that now desolate room made me very melancholy. I should have liked to stay out till morning, but I had to go in at last. For a whole month I stayed shut up there, working diligently at making verses, to the unlimited astonishment of the sparrows, who came from all the roofs in the neighbour-



hood to look in at my window. The consecrated bells too seemed to rejoice at seeing me always at work, and, to encourage me, they made lovely music.

Now and then I heard from Jack ; he was settled at Nice, and gave me minute details of all that happened to him.

"It is such a beautiful place !" he wrote ; "how you would be inspired by the sea just beneath my window ! but I have not much enjoyment of it, I scarcely ever go out. The marquis dictates all day long. What a man he is ! Sometimes between two sentences I lift my head for an instant, and I see a white sail on the horizon, then down goes my nose again on the paper. Mademoiselle d'Hacqueville continues very ill. I hear her coughing, always coughing, upstairs. That's the worst of this place, everybody coughs. I myself caught a bad cold the day we arrived, and I cannot get rid of it." A little farther on he said, "I beseech you, don't make Camille unhappy."

These last words went straight to my heart. Jack's constant watching over the happiness of the girl who would not return his love seemed very beautiful to me.

**"Oh, no, Jack, never fear!" I cried. "I will go and see them to-morrow."**

**(I had scarcely ever gone there since he went away.)**

**Alas for my good resolutions!**





## CHAPTER VIII.

MONT PARNASSE—"TAKE ME AWAY, JACK."

JACK had been away for two months, but there was no mention of his return. Mademoiselle d'Hacqueville was dead. The marquis, escorted by his secretary, paraded his deep mourning in all the towns of Italy, but without discontinuing his terrible dictation even for a single day. Overworked Jack could scarcely find time to write a few lines from Rome, Naples, Pisa, or Palermo ; but though the date changed often, the contents were always pretty

much the same. "Are you working well? How are the Pierrottes? How does the sale go on? Did Planche's article come out?" I replied always that I was working diligently, that the book was selling well, that the blue eyes were well, but that I had heard nothing of Gustave Planche. How much of all this was true? Not a word, except that neither that nor any other article had spoken of my book. The book was not selling at all, and as to the blue eyes, the truth was that my hundred-headed vanity, mortified by the neglect with which the first essay of my powers had been received, had taken umbrage at the whole human race, and I had not gone near them. In two months not a second copy of the book had been sold.

A friendly painter, one of the artists at the restaurant, to whom in my simplicity I expressed my astonishment at this fact, had the courage to speak out boldly to me.

"You think yourself a poet," said he, "but don't you see that you have not got a grain of the true poet in you? You have printed a silly book which no one reads, no one speaks of, and on the strength of that you set up for a poet. Why, man, your book is absurd, idiotic; can't you see it? You a poet! Only your brother, as great a simpleton as yourself, believes such rubbish. And his

letters! it is enough to make one die with laughter to hear him about Planche's article; while he, good fellow as he is, is working himself to death to support you. And I should like to know what you are doing? Do you know yourself? You have a head of a certain type and long hair, and you think that is all that is necessary. Why don't you go, then, and sit for a model at half-a-crown an hour? Only I warn you that your good looks are fast disappearing, you are getting positively ugly. Look at yourself in the glass. I am sure if you go back to Made-moiselle Pierrotte she will have nothing more to say to you. And yet you are just made for each other, you are both of you made to sell china, or what not, in the Saumon arcade. That is much more your line than setting up for the rival of such men as Lamartine and Victor Hugo."

That day I thought I would go to the Pierrottes, and throw myself on their mercy, and ask forgiveness. I went as far as the door, but I had not courage to go into the house which I had neglected for nine weeks. They had written to me, but I had not replied; they had come to see me, but I had hidden myself.

The failure of "The Adventures of a Blue Butterfly"

had driven me crazy. I had become cross, envious, and spiteful, and, with that, incapable of work of any kind. As I could not annihilate the world which had neglected me, I wished to be out of it, rather than go on living in it.

I tried to write to Jack. I told him that I had gone to Pierrotte's, but that shame and mortified vanity had prevented my crossing the threshold of the shop; that I had stood for a moment, hidden by the show in the window, watching Pierrotte, who was at his desk, looking sad enough; that then I had fled away and come home to write this letter.

"Advise me, Jack," I wrote; "I am suffering. The painter wounded me deeply; for he told me the truth, but he told it cruelly, and as if he took a pleasure in hurting me. I have ceased to believe in myself; I am afraid; what shall I do? Work? But at what, since I am not a poet? My book has not sold, which proves that I cannot write poetry. And how am I to pay what is due? My life is spoilt; I am distracted. All is dark around me."

That letter was never sent.

I have now reached the darkest page of my story.

Must I tell of the days of shame and misery in which I, Daniel Eyssette, was an actor in the suburbs of Paris? Yes, an actor, and, what is worse, an actor without vocation or talent!

Acting is one of the favourite fancies of young people who do not know what real work is—work that is for a purpose—who are, in short, utterly worthless. They think they have nothing to do but to turn poets, or writers in magazines, or actors; as if they could be any of these without hard work. This period of my life, full of sudden changes and disorder, has left me only vague records of remorse.

All that part of my memory is blurred. I can recall nothing clearly. I remember that one day in despair I left the Rue Bonaparte, and went to lodge in a hideous new house on the Boulevard Mont Parnasse, close to the theatre where, for fifty francs a month, I was hissed and re-hissed every night. To what abject misery had I fallen! I actually came to acting the lowest parts in low farces.

When I began at the theatre they said I was too short, too small; and then my shyness prevented my speaking out. I spoke in a whisper, as if I was in the

confessional. "Louder ! louder ! speak up !" they cried ; but the words were choked in my throat ; they could not get out. I was hooted and hissed off the boards. It was quite natural. What can be attained without study ? After all, that a man is a bad poet is no reason why he should be a good actor.

The type of my head had not deceived the manager. After two stormy and unsuccessful appearances in real drama, in which, on the strength of my hair, my eyes, my small mouth—my miniature beauty, in short, I had undertaken to be at once noble, impressive, and tragic, he sent for me to his room and said,—

"My man, the drama is not your line ; you made a mistake. You had better try farces ; I think you will do in them."

I tried them. I took the third-rate parts—the jack pudding who drinks lemonade by way of champagne, and runs about the stage holding his sides ; the driveller in a red wig, who bleats like a calf ; the clown, the buffoon—any part that was low and ridiculous ; and here at least I had a sort of success, for I made people laugh.

And now explain this if you can. When I was on the stage, all over paint and tinsel, I thought of Jack and of



Camille. In the midst of some absurd buffoonery, some silly pantomime, the image of those dear ones whom I had so basely deceived, so cruelly betrayed, rose before me. Many a night it has happened to me to stop short in the middle of some nonsensical speech, and to stand there as if struck dumb with open mouth and eyes fixed on the house. At such moments my soul was far away. I did not see the foot-lights ; the ceiling vanished. I was far away, whispering a word to Jack, receiving a kiss from my mother, asking forgiveness from Camille, and bewailing the sad depth to which I had fallen, I scarcely knew how. Then the prompter's voice would startle me from my dream, my heaven was gone, and I gazed round with a look so scared, a start so natural, that the house roared with laughter. In the slang of the theatre, this is called "a hit." Without meaning it I had made a hit.

The company to which I belonged performed in several places in the suburbs and neighbourhood of Paris. They were, in fact, a troop of strolling actors who played sometimes at Grenelle, sometimes at Sevres, sometimes at Mont Parnasse, at Sceaux, or St. Cloud. When we went out into the country we were packed into the

omnibus belonging to the company—a dingy old buff-coloured affair, drawn by a broken-winded horse. The actors who did not know their parts got into the back seats and studied their copy. My place was always among these. Almost all comic actors are taciturn and sad. I was no exception. I sat there sadly, deaf to all the nonsense that was buzzed about my ears. Low as I had sunk, this perambulating ark was yet below me. I was ashamed to be in such company; but I was wrong there, for among these poor beginners were some who had a future, some who might hope to become real artists. But the others!—Was it worth while to turn Pierrotte's parties into such ridicule, and to drift into shipwreck with such a rabble crew? My gloomy pride and sullen silence made me unpopular among my companions; they said I gave myself airs.

What was Jack doing all this time? Working away, and snatching every leisure moment to write to me. The letters were always the same—Jack's own letters; that is, everything that was generous, devoted, unselfish.

Very far indeed was poor Jack from suspecting the true state of things. I wrote to him that everything was going on well, that two-thirds of the edition was

sold, and that, when the bills fell due, they would be met by the money which was accumulating at the book-seller's. Always confiding, always good, he went on sending the hundred francs every month to the Rue Bonaparte, from whence the messenger of the theatre brought it regularly to me. With the hundred francs from Jack and fifty from the theatre any one but I would have had plenty to live on, especially among these poor devils ; but I have said before that I never knew what money was worth.

In less than two months I was over head and ears in debt. I owed money at my lodgings, at the restaurant, and to the porter of the theatre. Every now and then a creditor got tired of waiting, and came and was noisy in the morning. Then in despair I hastened to the printer of my unlucky poem, and borrowed a few Napoleons from him in Jack's name. The printer, who was then employed on the second volume of the Memoirs, and who knew that Jack was secretary to the Marquis d'Hacqueville, opened his purse without hesitation. By degrees I borrowed as much as four hundred francs from him, which, with the nine hundred for printing, brought Jack's debt up to thirteen hundred francs. Poor Jack !

what a load of disaster was to meet him when he returned! Daniel not forthcoming, Camille in tears, not a volume sold, a debt of thirteen hundred francs. How was he to face it all? This thought beset me incessantly; it was a never-ending torture. In vain I tried to forget the anguish by working like a galley slave; and what work was it? Great Heavens! to learn some fresh buffoonery! to study some new grimace before the mirror! Ah, that mirror! that would always give me Jack's image instead of mine. All in vain! in the lines of my part, instead of Langlumeau, Josias, and the other heroes of the farce, I could read nothing but his name, Jack, Jack, Jack! Every morning I looked at the calendar in terror, and as I counted the days that had still to pass before the first bill fell due, I said with a shudder, "One month more!" "Three weeks more!" For I knew right well that, if the first bill was dishonoured, all would be discovered, and my brother would be a martyr from that hour. Even in sleep the thought pursued me; often I woke with a start, my face bathed with tears and my heart beating at the recollection of the strange and dreadful dream I had had.

For this dream was always the same, and came back

every night. I dreamt I was in a strange room, where was a great press with iron scroll-work on it. Jack was there, pale—oh, so pale!—stretched on a sofa; he had just died! Camille Pierrotte was there too, and she was standing at the press, trying to open it, but she could not succeed; she felt round the keyhole with the key, and said, in a heart-rending voice, “I cannot open it; I have wept so much that I cannot see!” I fought against the dream with all my might, but it impressed me beyond all reason; the moment I closed my eyes I saw Jack stretched on the sofa, and Camille standing, blind, at the press. Is it any wonder that I became every day more gloomy and irritable?

Thus I dragged on a grovelling existence: those hours of wretchedness pass again before my eyes now. Oh! what did not my wretched vanity cost all who had persisted in loving me?

One evening, about nine o'clock, I had played in the first piece, and it was just over. I had gone up to the dressing-room, and undressed as quickly as possible. This hole, which I shared with two others, was a low-roofed closet, without windows, lighted by a skylight; two or three rush-bottomed chairs were the sole furni-





“Take me away, Jack.”

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ture. On the walls hung pieces of broken looking-glass, wigs all out of curl, spangled rags, faded velvet, and tarnished gilding ; on the ground, in one corner, was a heap of rouge pots without covers, worn-out powder-puffs, and such like. I was getting out of my stage dress as quickly as I could, when I heard a scene-shifter calling from below, "M. Daniel ! M. Daniel !"

I came out, and, leaning over the damp bannister, asked, "What is it ?"

There was no answer, so down I went half dressed, my face still smeared with white and red, and my great yellow wig coming over my eyes. At the foot of the stairs I ran against somebody.

"Jack !" I cried, tottering back.

It was Jack. We looked at one another for a moment speechless. Then Jack clasped his hands, and said, in a soft voice full of tears, "Oh, Daniel !"

That was enough. I looked all round me like a frightened child, and said, in a voice so low that my brother could scarce hear it, "Take me away, Jack."

I saw Jack shudder. He took me by the hand and led me out. A cab was at the door ; we got in.

"To Batignolles, Rue des Dames," said Jack.



"That's where I belong to," said the driver cheerily, and off we set.

Jack had been in Paris for two days. He had come from Palermo, where a letter from Pierrotte, which had been following him from place to place for three months, had at last reached him. This letter informed him, without mincing the matter, that I had disappeared.

As he read, Jack guessed the whole. He said, "The child is in a mess, I must go to him," and he went straight to the marquis, to ask for a week's leave of absence.

"A week's leave of absence!" cried the marquis, jumping up. "And my memoirs!"

"It is only for eight days, my lord; just time to get there and back again; it is a question of my brother's life."

"I cannot help that; were you not warned at starting? Do you forget our agreement?"

"No, my lord, but—"

"There is no 'but' in the case, it will be the same with you as with the others; if you leave your place for eight days, you don't come back. Think over it, I beg of you. And here, while you are considering, sit down; I am going to dictate."

"I have nothing to consider, my lord, I must go."

"Go, then!"

And the unmanageable old wretch took up his hat and marched straight to the French Consul's, to look for a new secretary.

Jack set out that same evening. He travelled without stopping till he got to the Rue Bonaparte.

"Is my brother upstairs?" cried he to the porter, who was sitting astride on the paling of the fountain in the courtyard, smoking his pipe. The porter began to laugh.

"No, he has been off after his own devices this some time," said he, with a knowing wink.

At first he pretended to be too discreet to say more, but a two-franc piece unlocked his lips. Then he told how the little lodger on the fifth floor had disappeared months ago, and was hiding nobody knew where; but that he was certainly in Paris, because he sent an errand-boy regularly every month to see whether anything had come for him. The porter added that M. Daniel had left the house without giving notice, and, consequently, four months' rent was due, besides other little things.

"Very well," said Jack, "you shall be paid." And without allowing himself time even to shake off the dust of his long journey, he turned away to look for his

guilty child. He went first to the printer's, rightly conjecturing that, as the main stock of the Pastoral Comedy was there, I was sure to go there sometimes.

"I was going to write to you, sir," said the printer; "you know that the first bill falls due in four days from this?"

Jack replied quietly, "Yes, I know; I will go round to the booksellers to-morrow, they have money in hand for me. The book has sold very well."

The printer opened his large Alsatian eyes to their widest extent.

"What? sold very well? Who told you that, sir?"

Jack turned pale; he foresaw a catastrophe.

"Just look there, at all that pile of books in the corner. Those are all the Pastoral Comedy; in all the five months since it came out only one copy has been sold. At last the booksellers were tired of keeping it, and they sent me back all the copies they had in stock. It is worth nothing but its weight as waste paper. It is a pity; it was well printed."

Every word fell like lead on Jack's heart, but the blow that stunned him was hearing that Daniel had borrowed money in his name.

"No later than yesterday," continued the pitiless

Alsatian, "he sent a messenger to borrow two Napoleons from me, but I refused point-blank ; first because I had no great confidence in the messenger, who looked like a chimney-sweep, and next because—you understand, M. Eyssette—I am a poor man myself, and I have already advanced above four hundred francs to your brother."

"I know," said Jack haughtily. Even yet he was determined to save his brother's honour. "You may be perfectly easy ; the money will be paid."

Then he went out hastily, for fear of betraying his feelings. When he got into the street he was obliged to sit down on a kerb-stone ; his legs would not support him ; his brain was reeling. His boy run away ; his own situation lost ; the money advanced by the printer ; the debt to the porter ; the bill to be met ! Suddenly he got up. "First of all, the debts," he said to himself ; "they come first."

In spite of the inexcusable behaviour of his brother towards the Pierrottes, he without hesitation turned to them. When he reached the shop, he at first did not recognize the large puffed sallow face which he saw behind the counter ; but, at the noise of the opening of the door, the large face looked up, and saw who had

come in, and there was a great exclamation, "I may well say!" which left no doubt of its identity.

Poor Pierrotte! his daughter's grief had completely changed him. The jovial, rubicund Pierrotte was gone. The tears which his little girl had wept for five months had reddened his eyes and wasted his cheeks. On his colourless lips the hearty laugh of old times had given place to a cold, silent smile, the smile of the widows and the deserted.

Nothing was changed in the shop; the china shepherdesses, the mandarins in dark blue robes, were all smirking beatifically on their shelves, among the Bohemian glass and the gilt plates; there were the big tureens and the painted china lamps shining behind the same plate-glass doors; and in the back shop the flute was trilling the identical airs.

"Yes, it is I, Pierrotte," said Jack, steadying his voice; and I am come to ask you a great favour. Will you lend me fifteen hundred francs?"

Pierrotte, without speaking, opened his cash-box, turned over some crowns, then, shutting the drawer, got up quietly.

"I have not got them here, M. Eyssette; wait a moment; I will go up and get them."

Before he left the shop, he turned round and said with some constraint,—

"I don't ask you to come up ; it would be too painful to her to see you. I can't help it ; I don't know what will restore her to herself, I may well say ; it is all past comprehension."

Jack sighed.

"You are right, Pierrotte ; it is better I should not go up."

In five minutes Pierrotte came back with two bank notes of a thousand francs each, which he put into Jack's hand. Jack refused to take them.

"I only want fifteen hundred," said he.

But the Cévenol insisted.

"I beg of you, M. Eyssette, sir ; keep them. I have a fancy for this particular sum of two thousand francs. It is exactly the sum mademoiselle lent me to buy me off from the conscription that time. Don't refuse me ; if you do, I may well say, you will hurt me cruelly."

Jack could not refuse him, he put the money in his pocket, and, holding out his hand to the Cévenol, said simply, "Thank you, Pierrotte." Pierrotte kept his hand in his. They remained thus for some time, silent and

much moved. Daniel's name was on the lips of each, but from the same feeling of delicacy they dared not utter it. They understood each other. Jack was the first to disengage himself gently. He felt tears coming, he was in haste to go out. The Cévenol accompanied him as far as the arcade. Then the poor fellow could no longer contain the bitterness which filled his heart, and he began reproachfully,—

“Ah, Monsieur Jack, Monsieur Jack! I may well say—” but he was too much overcome to finish his translation; he could only repeat, “I may well say, I may well say!”

He might well say, indeed!

From Pierrotte's, Jack went straight to the printer's. The Alsatian made some show of protest, but Jack insisted on paying him on the spot, not only the four hundred francs I had borrowed, but also the money for the three bills, that he might have it off his mind. Then, feeling his heart somewhat lighter, he said to himself, “And now to seek the child.” But the hour was too late for him to continue his search that day; besides, the fatigue of the journey, the agitation, and the short cough which had been wearing him for some time had so com-

pletely knocked him up, that he was compelled to go back to the Rue Bonaparte to rest a little.

Only a mother could tell what his tender heart suffered when he entered that little room, and saw, in the fading light of a late October evening, all the things that reminded him of his child; the desk at the window where he used to write his verses, his ink-bottle, his rusted pens, his glass—and when the kind bells of St. Germain, sounding a little thick through the fog, rang out the evening angelus, that mournful angelus which Daniel used to love so much!

He went round the room two or three times, and opened the cupboards, hoping to find some traces of the fugitive. Alas! all was empty. Nothing was left but some old linen and a few rags. The whole room spoke of desolation and despair. Daniel had not merely left it, he had fled. On the floor was a candlestick, and on the hearth, under a heap of burnt paper, he spied a white box with a gold line. Well he knew that box; it was in it that family letters were kept formerly; there it lay in the ashes. What desecration!

Pursuing his search, he pulled out a drawer of the writing-desk, and discovered some sheets of paper written



all over in the irregular, nervous hand which belonged to Daniel when he was "inspired." "A poem, no doubt," said poor Jack, getting close to the window that he might have light to read.

It was a poem indeed—a tale of woe which began thus, "Jack, I have deceived you. For the last two months I have told you nothing but falsehoods," and then followed the rest of the letter in which I had made a full confession. The letter had never been sent, but it had found its destination; Providence, instead of the post, had guided it to the right hand. Jack read it through to the end.

When he came to the part which spoke of an engagement at the theatre at Mont Parnasse, he gave a bound of joy. "I know where he is!" cried he, and, putting the letter in his pocket, he went to bed with a heart a little relieved; but though worn out with fatigue, that dreadful incessant cough prevented his sleeping. At the first tardy gleam of the chill autumn morning he rose quickly; he had settled his plans. He collected all the things which remained in the bottom of the press, and put them into his trunk, not forgetting the white box; then, leaving everything, door, cupboard, press, and window, wide open,

that nothing of the happy old life might hang about the home that was to belong to others now, he bid a last farewell to the old steeple of St. Germain's.

He then went downstairs, gave up the rooms, paid the rent in arrear, and the small sums due besides, and, without making any answer to the fishing questions of the porter, he hailed a passing cab, and drove to the Hôtel Pilois, Rue des Dames, at Batignolles.

The hotel was kept by a brother of old Pilois, the marquis's cook ; no one was taken in there for less than three months or without a reference ; in this way it enjoyed a distinguished reputation. To live at the Hôtel Pilois was a guarantee of one's general respectability. Jack, who had been in the good graces of the Vatel of the House of Hacqueville, had been the bearer of a hamper of Marsala from him to his brother. This was sufficient recommendation, and when he modestly asked for rooms, he was at once shown a good room on the ground floor, with two large windows opening on the garden of the—hotel ; I was going to say, of the convent. The garden was of no great extent. Three or four acacias, a square grass-plot as green as the grass at Batignolles usually is, a fig-tree without any figs, a

stunted vine and a few chrysanthemums formed its sole attractions ; but this was enough to enliven the room which was otherwise a little gloomy.

Jack began to settle himself without a moment's delay ; he drove in nails, locked up his clothes, set up a shelf for Daniel's books, hung up his mother's portrait at the head of the bed, in short, did all he could to get rid of the odious look common to all furnished lodgings, and when he had made himself at home, he snatched a morsel of breakfast, and went out immediately. On his way out he apprised M. Pilois that he should probably be out late for once that evening, and requested him to order a nice little supper for two, with some good wine, to be served in his own room.

It would be hard to say why Jack was so certain of finding me at Mont Parnasse. I might have left the theatre since I wrote that letter, or I might have failed to get an engagement there ; but the instinct of the parental relation he had assumed towards me guided him aright. He had a firm conviction that he should find me there, and bring me back with him that very evening, but he prudently thought, "If I want to find him, he must suspect nothing beforehand." Therefore he would not go to the theatre to make any inquiries. Gossip flies fast

behind the scenes ; a whisper might give the alarm ; he thought the better way would be to consult the placards.

The playbills of the theatres in the suburbs are to be found at the doors of the wine-shops of the region, behind a wire grating, just like the notices of marriages in the villages of Alsace. When Jack read them he made an exclamation of joy. At the Mont Parnasse Theatre there was announced for this evening, " Marie Jeanne, a drama in five acts ; preceded by, Nothing but Dried Plums, a farce in one act, by Mdle. Léontine and MM. Daniel and Antonin."

"All right!" said he, "I have the game in my own hand now."

He went into a coffee-house to wait till the hour came for carrying me off. When evening came, he went to the theatre. The piece had begun ; he walked for nearly an hour under the portico where the policemen stand. From time to time the sounds of applause from the interior reached his ear like distant hail. It made him sick at heart to think that it was, perhaps, the grimaces of his child that were thus applauded. Towards nine o'clock a crowd of people poured forth into the street ; the farce was over. Some were laughing still ; there was whistling and calling out "Hallo !

Pilouitte!"—all the vociferous slang of a low Paris crowd.

Well, they were not coming out from the Italian Opera exactly. He waited a minute or two, almost lost in the mob ; then, as people were flocking in again to the second piece, he glided up a dark grimy passage, and asked to speak to M. Daniel. Another minute, and "Mother Jack" had recovered his child, and was hastening away with him to the other side of Paris.





## CHAPTER IX.

### THE DREAM.

"SEE, Daniel!" said Jack, as we entered his room at the Hôtel Pilois, "it is just like the night you came to Paris."

As on that night, indeed, an inviting supper-table was ready for us ; the cloth was as white as snow, the pie smelt delicious, the wine looked old, the glasses sparkled brightly in the candle-light. But, oh, no ! it was not the same. Happiness like that does not come

back. The feast was there indeed, but where were the guests? Where was the joy of the arrival? where were the plans for work, the dreams of fame, the blessed trust which makes everything look bright and sweetens every morsel? Alas! not one of these joyous companions was here; they had all stayed behind in the old steeple.

Even the sense of relief, the buoyant spring with which my heart ought to have hailed its release, was not there.

Oh, no! it was not the same. I felt it so keenly that Jack's remark, instead of making me gay, called a flood of tears to my eyes. I am sure he could have wept too, but he bravely controlled himself, and, assuming a cheerful air, said,—

“Come, Daniel, that's enough! you have been crying all the last hour.” (I had done nothing but sob on his shoulder all the time he was talking to me in the cab.) “This is a queer sort of welcome. Really you remind me of the worst time in my life, the days of the glue-pots and ‘Jack, you are a donkey!’ Come! dry your eyes, my poor little penitent; and here, look at yourself in the glass—that will make you laugh!”

I looked in the glass, but I did not laugh; I was

overwhelmed with shame. I had my yellow wig flattened down on my brows ; my cheeks were thick with rouge and white paint, all streaked with tears. Oh, how hideous ! With a gesture of disgust I snatched the wig off ; but, just as I was in the act of throwing it on the fire, I changed my mind and hung it up on a nail in the very middle of the wall.

Jack watched me in great astonishment.

“What are you putting that trophy there for, Daniel ? Why, we shall look like Cherokee Indians who have scalped Punchinello !”

I replied gravely,—

“It is no trophy, Jack. I want to have my remorse, palpable and visible, always before me.”

The shadow of a bitter smile crossed his face, but he instantly resumed his joyous air.

“Pooh ! forget all that ; and now that you have got rid of all your paint, and that I can see your dear little phiz and your own curly pate again, let us have some supper, for I am dying of hunger.”

It was not true ; he was not hungry ; neither was I. In vain I tried to do honour to his good supper. All I tried to swallow seemed to choke me, and, in spite of



my efforts to be calm, the tears dropped on my plate. Jack was watching me with the corner of his eye, and said,—

“What are you crying for? Are you sorry to be here? Are you angry with me for running away with you?”

I replied sadly,—

“That’s a hard word, Jack ; but you have a right to say what you will.”

We carried on the pretence of eating for some time longer. At last Jack, tired of the farce, pushed away his plate, saying,—

“Well, I see it’s no good ; we can’t eat ; we had better go to bed.”

We have a proverb in our country which says, “Anguish and sleep do not lie in the same bed.” That night I felt how true it was. My anguish was the thought of all Jack had been to me, and how I had repaid him ; the thought of what my life and his had been—mine all selfishness, his all self-sacrifice ; of my puerile cowardice contrasted with his heroic heart, whose motto was, “The only happiness in the world is to make others happy.” Bitterly I told myself that my life was

shipwrecked ; I had lost Jack's confidence, and Camille's love, and my own esteem. What was left to me ?

This frightful anguish kept me awake till morning. Jack slept no better. I could hear him tossing from left to right on his pillow, and coughing with a hard cough which made my heart ache. Once I asked him, very gently,—

“What is it, Jack ? Are you ill ?”

He answered,—

“Nothing ; go to sleep !”

I thought he was more angry with me than he had chosen to appear. The idea redoubled my grief ; I hid my head under the blanket and cried, till at last I fell asleep. Tears are soporific sometimes.

When I woke it was broad day. Jack was not beside me. I thought he had left the room, but, pushing aside the curtains, I saw him at the far end of the room, lying on the sofa, and oh, so pale ! A terrible thought crossed my brain. I darted over to him. “Jack !” I cried. He was asleep, and my cry did not wake him. It was strange ; his countenance had in sleep a look of sadness and suffering which I had never seen on it waking, and yet which was not new to me. His thin and worn

features, the paleness of his wan cheek, the sickly transparency of his hands, gave me a sharp pang, but it was a pang I had felt before. Yet Jack had never been ill ; he had never had that blue line under his eyes, that emaciated face.

In what former existence had I seen the vision of these things? Suddenly the recollection of my dream flashed upon me. Yes, that was my dream—Jack lying on the sofa, pale, just dead ! Dead ! and I had killed him !

A pale ray of sunshine just then crept along the wall like a lizard and fell on his face. Oh, joy ! he awoke, rubbed his eyes, and, seeing me standing beside him, said, with a bright smile,—

“Good morning, Daniel. Did you sleep well? My cough was too bad. I came over to the sofa that I might not wake you.”

And while he was thus speaking cheerfully, I felt my lips trembling with the horror of the vision I had had, and in my secret heart I cried,—

“Merciful God, preserve my Jack to me !”

In spite of this melancholy awakening, we were cheerful enough that morning. Even the echo of the



Yes ! that was my dream.

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old laugh came back to us when I began to dress, and found that the only clothes I had were a pair of fustian breeches and a red waistcoat with long flaps; in point of fact, some of the theatrical wardrobe which I had on when he carried me off.

“One does not think of everything,” said Jack; “but never fear, we will fit you out. You see, it is your arrival at Paris over again!”

He said that to give me pleasure, but I knew he felt as well as I did how great the difference was. Great indeed!

“Come, Daniel,” said he, when he saw my desponding look return, “don’t let us think of the past. A new life is before us, let us begin again, without remorse, without distrust; only let us try not to make the same mistakes over again. I don’t ask you what you intend to do, brother mine, but if you are going to undertake a new poem, I think this will be a good place to work in. The room is quiet, and there are birds singing in the garden. We will set up the rhyming table close to the window.”

I interrupted him quickly. “No, Jack, no more poetry, no more rhymes. That fancy has cost you too dear already. All I want to do now is to work like

you, to earn my bread, and if I may, to help you at last to restore our home."

He replied with a calm smile, "Very fine projects, my Blue Butterfly, but no one asks you to do that. You need not work for your bread, and if you would only promise—but enough, we will talk of that later; let us now go and buy some clothes for you."

To enable me to go out, I was obliged to don one of his great coats, which came down to my heels, and made me look like a Savoyard musician; I wanted nothing but the hurdy-gurdy. Some months ago I should have died of shame if I had had to show myself in the streets such a figure, but I had other shame to think about now—the passers-by might laugh as much as they liked. It was a very different story from the goloshes—very different!

"Now that you look like a Christian again," said Jack, as we left the clothes shop, "I am going to take you back to the hotel, and then I will go and see whether the ironmonger, whose books I used to keep before I went to Nice, will give me some work again. Pierrotte's money will not last for ever, and I must think of our bread and cheese."

I was on the point of saying, "Well then, go to your ironmonger's; I can quite well go home by myself; but I understood what his motive was; he wanted to make sure that I would not go back to Mont Parnasse. Oh, if he could but have read my heart! To satisfy him I let him take me home, but as soon as his back was turned I escaped to the street. I had my rounds to make too. It was late when I returned. Through the fog that was rising in the garden I saw a tall figure pacing up and down, apparently in agitation. It was Jack, shivering with cold.

"It is well you have come home," said he: "I was just going to look for you at Mont Parnasse."

I felt angry for a moment. "You distrust me too much," I said. "Is it always to be thus? Will you never trust me again? I swear to you by all I hold most dear that I have not been where you think I have; that I desire as little as you wish to see me do it, to return to that theatrical career for which I am still more unfit than for writing poetry. Do believe me, Jack, that I am yours again heart and soul, and that the dreadful past from which your tenderness has rescued me, has left nothing but remorse, not one regret. What



shall I say to convince you ? Oh, that you could see into my heart ! ”

I do not remember with what words he replied to me, but I remember that in the gloomy twilight I saw him shake his head sadly, as if to say, “ I wish I could believe you.”

But I was really sincere in what I said. No doubt I should never if left to myself have had courage to tear myself from my miserable existence, but now that my fetters were broken, I felt inexpressibly relieved. I felt as those do who try to put an end to their existence by charcoal, and who repent too late when they are already nearly suffocated and paralyzed by the fumes. Suddenly their neighbours come, the door is broken in, the saving fresh air rushes into the room, and the poor fools drink it in with delight, happy to be still alive and vowing never to do such a thing again. In like manner, after five months of moral suffocation, I once more inhaled with transport the pure and bracing air of respectable life, I filled my lungs with the invigorating draughts, and I can testify that I had not the least desire to return to my degradation.

Jack did not believe this, nor could all the oaths in

the world avail to convince him of my sincerity. I deserved it.

We spent this first evening at home, sitting close to the fire as if it was winter, for the room was damp, and the fog from the garden penetrated to our very bones. Besides, you know, when people are sorrowful it does them good to see a little blaze. Jack was working at accounts. In his absence the ironmonger had attempted to keep his books himself, and the result had been such scrawling, such a hash of debtor and creditor, that it would take a whole month to put his books in order. As you may guess, I should have liked nothing better than to help him in this operation. But blue butterflies know nothing of arithmetic, and after poring for an hour over the long lines of red ink, full of strange hieroglyphics, I was obliged to give it up.

Jack got on capitally through this dry business. He plunged into the thickest of the figures, and was not frightened by the long columns ; now and then, as if a little uneasy at my silent reverie, he turned towards me in the middle of his work, and said,—

“This is very comfortable, isn't it ? at least you are not tired of it, are you ?

No, I was not tired, but it grieved me to see him work so hard ; and I bitterly thought, " Why am I left on the earth ? I cannot do anything with my hands ; I am a mere burthen to every one, and all I can do is to make those who love me weep." I thought of the past, of my father, my mother, the Pierrottes, and the affection (so ill requited and so little deserved !) which Camille had given to me instead of to him who was so worthy of it.

Was it true, then, that a girl has no control over her affections ? Or was it that Pierrotte had said so much of my likeness to my mother, that the innocent child had thought I must resemble her morally as well as in outward form ? Oh, my dear mother, how far I was from resembling you in character ! Then, again, in spite of these severe reflections on myself, there would rise, as it were, a whisper of hope in the depths of my heart, a faint glimmering of those old joys which I had shattered with my own hand, and I tried to nurse it into life. Perhaps it is not quite too late, I thought. Would they forgive me if they saw me at their feet ?

This melancholy evening was a sample of the life we were to lead henceforward. All the succeeding days

resembled it. Jack would work for ten hours up to the eyes in arithmetic, and I—I used to poke the fire, and think of the past. Towards the middle of the day, when I saw him quite engrossed by his books, I sometimes crept to the door like a mouse, and stole away, saying, “I shall be back presently, Jack.” He never asked me where I was going, but I knew by his mournful look, and by the tone, full of uneasiness, in which he said, “Are you going away?” that he did not trust me.

One evening I came back from one of my mysterious walks, and entered the room with a cry of joy. “Jack, Jack! good news! I have got a place; I never told you, but I have been for the last ten days tramping through the streets in search of one; and at last I have found one. To-morrow I am to begin as superintendent-general at the Ouly Institute at Montmartre, quite close to us here. I am to go from seven in the morning to seven in the evening; I shall be a long time away from you, but at least I shall be earning my bread, and I shall be able to relieve you a little.”

Jack looked up from his figures, and replied rather coldly,—

“Well, my lad, it is quite time you should help me

a little ; the burthen is getting too heavy for me. I don't know what is the matter with me, but for some time back I have felt utterly done up."

A violent fit of coughing made him unable to go on. He let his pen fall with a sorrowful air, and sank on the sofa. The sight of him lying there pale as death, brought the dreadful dream once more before my eyes, but it was only for an instant. He got up almost immediately, and began to laugh at my terrified looks.

"It is nothing, you goose ; I am a little over-tired ; I have worked too hard lately, and now that you have got a situation, I will take things more quietly, and in a week I shall be all right."

He said it so naturally, with such a smiling face, that my dark presentiments took flight, and for a month after that my brain was free from their black shadowy wings.

Next day I went to the Ouly Institute. Notwithstanding its pompous appellation, the Institute was nothing but a school on the smallest scale, kept by a good old widow lady, whom the children used to call 'Goody.' There was a score or so of small boys, quiet little fellows ; the sort of children who come to school with their luncheon in a basket, and have always a bit of their shirt sticking out.

These were our pupils. Madame Ouly used to teach them hymns, and I initiated them into the mysteries of the alphabet. I had, moreover, charge of them in playhours, in a courtyard where there were some hens, and a turkey cock of which the young gentlemen stood in great awe.

Sometimes, too, when "Goody" had the gout, it fell to my lot to sweep out the schoolroom, an employment rather beneath the dignity of a superintendent, but I was so happy at earning my bread, that I performed the task without any objection. When I went home in the evening, I found Jack and dinner waiting for me. After dinner we took a brisk turn or two round the garden, and then came our evening at the fireside.

Such was our life. Its great events were the occasional letters from our father and mother. Our mother was still living at Uncle Baptiste's; my father was still travelling for the wine company. He was getting on very well. Almost all the debts at Lyons were paid; in a year or two his affairs would have righted themselves, and we might look forward to being together again.

For my part, I was anxious that our mother should come and join us at the Hôtel Pilois, but Jack would not have it so.

"Not yet," he said, with a curious expression ; "no, not yet—wait a little."

This unvarying reply used to break my heart. I said to myself, "He distrusts me ; he is afraid I should commit some folly when our mother is with us, that is why he wants to wait."

I was mistaken. That was not what made him say, "Wait a little."





## CHAPTER X.

### THE DREAM COMES TRUE.

READER, if you are more sensible than I am, if you laugh at dreams, if your heart never aches with the presentiment of coming evil, if you are one of those matter-of-fact people who never let a grain of superstition lurk in their minds, shut the book. What remains to be told in these last chapters of my story is true, but you will not listen to it.

It was the 4th of December.



I came back from the Institute even faster than usual. I had left Jack at home in the morning ; he was complaining of being very tired, and I was longing to know how he was. As I crossed the garden I ran up against M. Pilois, who was standing by the fig-tree, talking in a low voice to a little fat man, who seemed to have a world of trouble in buttoning his gloves.

I made my apology, and was hurrying on, but the innkeeper stopped me.

"Could I speak a word with you, M. Daniel ?" Then, turning to the other, he said, "This is the young man : I think it would be well to tell him."

I was utterly puzzled. What could this little fat man have to tell me ? that his gloves were too tight for his hands ? I could see that myself. There was a moment of silence and embarrassment. M. Pilois looked straight up into the fig-tree, as if he was looking for the figs which were not there. The man with the gloves tugged at his button-holes. At length he spoke, but still fumbling at the button.

"Sir," he said, "for twenty years I have been the medical attendant of the Hôtel Pilois, and I can affirm—"

I cut him short ; the words " medical attendant " had told me all.

" You came to see my brother," said I, trembling. " Is he very ill ? "

I do not suppose that the doctor was a bad or a cruel man, but just at that moment he was engrossed by his gloves, and, without remembering whom he was speaking to, without a thought of softening the blow, he answered roughly,—

" Very ill ? I should think so ! He can't pass the night."

The blow went home. He had a rough touch, that doctor. The house, the garden, the two men—all seemed to be turning round. I was forced to lean against the fig-tree. He, however, perceived nothing, but went on with the greatest calmness, trying all the time to button his glove,—

" It is a frightful case of the most rapid consumption ; nothing can save him. Besides, I was called in much too late, as usual."

" It is not my fault, doctor," said the good-hearted innkeeper, who persisted in looking for figs that the tears in his eyes might not be seen ; " it is not my fault.

I knew long ago that M. Eyssette was ill, and I often advised him to see some one, but he never would. I am sure he was afraid of alarming his brother. You see, the poor lads are so bound up in each other."

A sob of despair burst from my very heart.

"Come!" said the doctor kindly, "don't give way. Who knows? science has indeed given her verdict, but nature may yet—. I will come back to-morrow."

He turned on his heel, and went away.

I waited a moment to compose myself a little, and then, summoning up all my courage, I went into our room with a deliberate step. What a scene met my eyes when I opened the door! In order, no doubt, to leave the bed for me, Jack had had a mattress put on the sofa, and there he lay, pale—pale even as I had seen him in my dream. My first idea was to snatch him up and carry him to the bed—anywhere off that dreadful sofa! but an instant's thought reminded me that I could not lift him; he was too tall. The sight of my Jack lying there where my dream had said he must die, was more than I could bear, and the mask of cheerfulness which we rigidly assume to cheer the dying

would no longer keep on, and I fell on my knees beside the sofa. With difficulty Jack turned himself towards me.

“Is that you, Daniel? You met the doctor, didn't you? The old fool! I had begged him so much not to frighten you, but I see he did not mind me, and you know all. Give me your hand, brother. Who could ever have thought it? So many people go to Nice to get rid of a decline, and I went there to get one. Strange, isn't it? Oh, Daniel! if you grieve in this way, you will take away all my courage, and I am not too valiant. This morning, when you went out, I knew it was all over with me. I sent for the priest of St. Pierre; he came to see me, and he will be here presently to give me the last Sacraments. He is a good man, that curé; his name is the same as your friend at the college at Sarlande.

He could not speak any more; his head fell back on the pillow, and he closed his eyes. I thought he was dead. I cried out loud, “Oh, Jack! my Jack!” He did not speak, but his hand moved gently, as if saying, “There! there!” as a mother soothes a child.

The door opened. M. Pilois came in, followed by a stout man, who rolled over to the sofa, crying out,—

“What is this that I hear, Monsieur Jack, sir? I may well say—”

“Good evening, Pierrotte,” said Jack, opening his eyes, “Good evening, my kind old friend. I knew you would come to me at once. Let him come close to me, Daniel; we have things to say to one another.”

Pierrotte bent his head close to the dying lips; they stayed thus for some minutes.

I stood motionless in the middle of the room. My books were still under my arm. M. Pilois took them gently from me, saying something I did not understand; then he lighted the candles, and laid a large white napkin on the table. I wondered, and thought to myself, “What is he doing? Why does he put the cloth on? Not for dinner? I could not eat.”

It was getting dark. Outside, in the garden, the people of the inn were making signs as they looked at our windows.

Jack and Pierrotte were still talking. I heard the Cévenol's voice, thick with tears, saying, “Yes, Monsieur

Jack ; yes, Monsieur Jack," but I did not dare to go over to them. At length Jack called me and made me come to his bedside, close to Pierrotte.

"Daniel, my beloved," said he, after a long pause, "I am so sorry to have to leave you! but one thing comforts me—you won't be alone. You will have Pierrotte, our kind friend Pierrotte, who has forgiven you, and has promised me to be instead of me to you."

"Oh, yes! Monsieur Jack, I promise, I may well say, —I promise."

"You see, my poor child, you could never restore the home by yourself. I don't want to pain you, but you are not a good hand at that work. But I do think that, with Pierrotte's help, you will succeed in carrying out our beautiful dream. I don't ask you to be a man ; like the Abbé Germane, I think you will be a child all your life ; but I implore you to be a good child, a brave child. And above all—come a little nearer, that I may whisper—above all, don't make the blue eyes sad." He stopped to rest for a minute or two, and then resumed, "When it is all over, you will write to papa and mamma. Only be sure you tell them by degrees ; it would do them

harm to hear it all at once. Now you know why I would not send for our mother. I did not wish her to see—this. There are some things too hard for a mother.”

He stopped and looked towards the door, and made us a sign to go a little away.

It was the Viaticum. The priest placed the Host and the holy oil on the white cloth between the candles and then approached the bed. The last rites began.

When all was done—oh, how long the time seemed !—Jack called me gently, with a sweet smile.

“ Kiss me,” he said, in a faint voice, so faint that it sounded as if he was a long way off ; he was far off, far on the road to the other world.

Then, as I stooped to kiss him, my hand met his ; his dear hand, all moist with the damp of death. I took it in mine, and did not let it go again. We stayed thus for I know not how long ; it may have been an hour, it may have been an eternity. He did not speak ; he did not see me any longer. Only several times his hand faintly pressed mine, as if to tell me, “ I know you are by me.” Suddenly a long shiver passed over his body







“Try to pray.”

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from head to foot. I saw him open his eyes and look round, as if he was looking for somebody. I put my ear close to him, and I heard him say, very faintly, twice over, "Jack, you are a donkey ! Jack, you are a donkey !" Then no more.

He was dead !

Oh, my dream ! my dream !

There was a high wind that night. The cold December rain was lashing the window-panes. On the table at the end of the room a silver crucifix was gleaming between two wax candles. A priest I did not know was kneeling before the Christ, praying aloud. I heard his voice through the roaring of the wind. I did not pray nor weep ; I had but one thought—it was to try to warm the beloved hand which was clasped in mine. Alas ! the nearer the morning came, the colder and stiffer grew that hand.

Suddenly the priest, who was reciting the Latin prayers, got up and laid his hand heavily on my shoulder.

"Try to pray," said he ; "it will help you."

I knew him then. It was my old friend the Abbé Germane himself. I was so stunned by misery that it

did not surprise me to see him there ; it seemed quite natural.

But as the reader has not the same reason for not being surprised, I must explain how the Professor from Sarlande came to be in the chamber of death.

You will recollect, perhaps, that when I was leaving the college the Abbé Germane said,—

“ I have a brother at Paris, a good priest ; but where’s the use of giving you his address ? you would not remember to go to him.”

See what fate can do. This brother of the Abbé was the priest of the church of St. Pierre at Montmartre, and it was he whom my poor Jack had sent for to his dying bed. At this very time the Abbé was passing through Paris, and was staying at the priest’s house. The evening of the 4th of December his brother came in late, and said to him,—

“ I have just been administering the last Sacraments to a poor lad who is dying close to this ; we must pray for him.”

The Abbé replied,—

“ I will remember him to morrow, when I say mass. What is his name ? ”

"Stay, it is a southern name, not easy to recollect. Eysetta—yes, that's it—Jacob—John Eyssette."

The name Eyssette recalled a certain poor little wretch to the Abbé's mind, and without a moment's delay he hastened to the Hôtel Pilois. On entering he saw me there, rivetted to Jack's hand.

He would not disturb me in my grief, and sent every one away, telling them that he would watch over me ; then he knelt down, and it was not till towards morning that, frightened at my silence, he came over and roused me, and made himself known to me.

After that I do not remember much of what happened. Of the end of that fearful night, of the day that followed it, and of many days after, I have only a vague, confused recollection. There is a blot in my memory there.

I do recollect, but vaguely, as if it had happened in another existence—I do recollect a long, an interminable walk through the muddy streets behind a black carriage. I was following it bareheaded between Pierrotte and the Abbé Germane. A cold rain, mingled with hail, was driving in our faces ; Pierrotte was carrying a large umbrella, but he held it so clumsily, and the rain was falling

so heavily that the Abbé's cassock was shining with streams of water. The rain! the rain! oh, how it rained! Near us, at the side of the carriage, walked a tall man, all in black, carrying a long ebony staff; this was death's chamberlain, his master of the ceremonies. Like other chamberlains, he had a silk cloak, short breeches, and a three-cornered hat. Do I dream? Is it hallucination? I think that strange-looking man is like M. Viot. He has the same long figure, his head is on one side, and every time he looks at me he has the same cold, false smile which used to be on the lips of the terrible inquisitor. It is not M. Viot; perhaps it is his ghost.

The black carriage goes on, but, oh, so slowly! At last we came to a melancholy-looking garden, with paths of yellow mud, in which I sank to my ankles. We stopped at a deep grave. Men in black cloaks bore a long heavy coffin, which they let down into it. It was a difficult operation; the ropes were stiff with the rain, and would not run. I heard one of the men say, "The feet this way."

Opposite to me, on the other side of the grave, M. Viot's ghost, with its head on one side, was still

smiling at me. Its long lean shape, pinched up in its black garments, stood out against the grey sky like a gigantic black grasshopper, all dripping with rain.

Then I was alone with Pierrotte ; we were going down through the Faubourg Montmartre ; Pierrotte was looking for a cab, but there was none to be had. I walked beside him, still carrying my hat in my hand. I seemed to be still following the hearse. As we went along, people turned round to look at the stout man who was crying while he called for a cab, and the boy who was walking bare-headed through the driving rain. We went on and on. I was very weary, and I felt a weight on my head. At length we came to the arcade ; there was the shop "Pierrotte, late Lalouette," with its painted shutters all streaming with green rain.

We did not go into the shop, but went straight upstairs.

At the first landing-place my strength failed.

I sat down on the stairs ; I could not go another step ; my head felt too heavy. Pierrotte took me in his arms, and, as he carried me up, half dead and shaking with

fever, I heard the rain pattering on the glazed roof of the arcade, and the water from the shoots noisily plashing in the yard.

It rains ! it rains ! oh, how it rains !





## CHAPTER XI.

### THE END OF THE DREAM.

IT is hard to tell the story of the next three weeks. The worn-out boy you saw carried upstairs in Pierrotte's arms is dying. The street before the arcade is littered with thick straw, which is renewed every second day; and people say, as they pass by, some rich old man is dying up there; but it is not a rich old man, it is Daniel. All the doctors have given him up. Two typhoid fevers in two years were too much for that humming-bird brain



of his. Send for the black carriage; the great black grasshopper may prepare his ebony staff and his dreary smile. Daniel is dying. Great was the consternation in the Maison Lalouette. Pierrotte never slept; the blue eyes were full of despair. Madame Tribu turned over her book of nostrums frantically. The yellow drawing-room was shut up, the piano was silent, the flute forbidden. Saddest, oh, saddest of all! was a slight black figure seated in a corner, without ever uttering a word, knitting from morning to night, while large tears coursed down her cheeks.

While the old house was plunged in woe, Daniel was lying motionless on a soft bed, all unconscious of the tears which were shed for him day and night. His eyes were open, but he saw nothing, his senses conveyed nothing to his soul. He heard nothing but a confused murmur, a deafening rolling in his ears, as if they had been two of those large sea shells with pink lips, in which the sound of the waves is for ever moaning. He did not speak, he did not think; he was like a sick flower. Provided he had a wet cloth continually on his head, and a piece of ice in his mouth, he seemed to require nothing. When the ice melted in the parched

mouth, and when the fire in his brain dried the wet cloth, he uttered a groan ; but that was the only sign of life.

Many days passed thus, days unmarked by hours, days of chaos.

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Suddenly one morning I had an extraordinary sensation. It seemed as if I had just been drawn up from the bottom of the sea. I could see and hear. That wonderful apparatus for thinking, with all its fine mechanism, delicate as gossamer threads, which for three weeks had slumbered in some corner of my brain, now woke up and resumed its action. Slowly at first, then quicker, then with a rush as if everything must give way. Ideas, tangled like a skein of silk, crowded on me in a confused whirl.

“ Where am I ? Oh, heaven ! what is this great bed ? and those three ladies by the window ; that form in black, with its back turned to me ; do I not know it ? I could almost fancy— ”

And the better to look at that black form, which I thought I knew, I rose on my elbow with a painful effort, and leant forward, but then I fell back in terror.

For opposite to me I saw a tall walnut wood press with iron scroll-work on the front. I knew that press, I had seen it in a dream, a dreadful dream.

My brain went like the wind. Oh! I remembered everything now. The Hôtel Pilois; Jack's death; the funeral; the rain. I remembered all—all—all. Alas! I had awaked to pain and misery, and my first word was a groan.

At that groan the three women at the window started; the youngest got up, saying, "More ice!" and she went quickly to the marble chimney-piece and got a piece of ice, which she put to my lips, but I turned from it. I gently repelled the hand which held it (it was a very delicate hand for a nurse's), and in a trembling voice I said, "Good morning, Camille!"

Camille Pierrotte was so much surprised to hear words from the lips which she thought would never speak again, that she stood in speechless amaze, with her arms extended, and her rosy fingers holding the slippery morsel of transparent ice.

"Good morning, Camille," I whispered again; "yes, I know you; I am quite myself again; and you, can you see me, can you really see me?"

Camille opened her eyes very wide. "See you, Daniel? Why, of course I can see you!"

I thought if Camille was not blind, the horrible dream was not all true to the end, and I took courage and ventured to ask some more questions.

"Have I been very ill, Camille?"

"Yes, very ill indeed."

"And have I been a long time in bed?"

"Three weeks to-morrow."

"Three weeks! Oh, merciful heaven, then it is three weeks since my dear Jack—" I could not finish the sentence, I hid my face on the pillow.

At this moment Pierrotte came into the room, bringing with him a new doctor. (If only the illness goes on long enough, all the faculty will have a turn at it.) This is a famous doctor, a skilful man who knows his business, and does not amuse himself buttoning his gloves when he comes to see a patient. He examined my eyes, felt my pulse, and then, turning to Pierrotte, said, "Why, what nonsense were you telling me? This lad is not dying, he is recovering."

"Recovering!" exclaimed Pierrotte, clasping his hands.

"So certainly, that you may begin by throwing your

ice out of the window, and get a wing of chicken for your patient, and let him wash it down with some good claret. Come, don't fret any more, my dear young lady ; in a week you will have this young deceiver on his legs again, take my word for it. Meantime, keep him as quiet as possible ; keep all agitation from him, let him have no excitement, that is the essential point ; and then let Nature do all the rest. She understands more about it than either you or I."

Thus saying, the illustrious physician patted my shoulder, smiled at mademoiselle, and went out briskly, escorted by the good Pierrotte, who was crying for joy, and repeating, "Oh, doctor, I may well say—I may well say—"

When they were gone, Camille said I must sleep, but I refused with all the strength I had.

"Don't go, Camille, please don't. Don't leave me alone. How can I sleep with the sorrow that you know I have?"

"Yes, Daniel, I know, but you must sleep. Be sensible, shut your eyes, and don't think of anything. I will soon come back, and if you have slept, I will stay a long time with you."

"Very well, I am asleep," said I, closing my eyes.

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"Only this one thing, Camille," as I recollected something ; "tell me who is that in a black dress, whom I saw here just now ?"

"In a black dress ?"

"Yes, you know quite well what I mean ; she was working close beside you at the window. She is not there now, but I saw her just now, I am quite sure."

"Oh, no, Daniel, you are making a mistake ; I was sitting working there all the morning with Madame Tribu, your old friend, you know, that you used to call the lady of great merit ; but Madame Tribu is not in black, she is wearing the same old green dress ; no indeed, there is no black dress in the house ; you must have dreamt it ; but I am going now. I hope you will have a good sleep."

Then Camille ran off ; she was quite confused, and her cheeks were as red as fire, just as if she had been telling a falsehood. I was alone, but I did not sleep the better for that. My brain was going like wild-fire. It could not rest, and everything was tangled and confused. I thought of my darling brother sleeping in his grave ; of the blue eyes, those lovely lights which Providence seemed to have created for me, and which now—

Here the door of the room opened a little, very, very softly, as if somebody was coming in, but Camille's voice said in a whisper, "No, no, don't go in! the agitation would kill him if he wakes."

The door closed as gently as it had opened, but unluckily the skirt of a black dress was caught in the opening, and I saw it from my bed. My heart gave a great bound, and I cried, "Mother! mother! why don't you come to me?"

Immediately the slight black figure came in hastily, but instead of coming to the bed, she went towards the other end of the room with outstretched arms, crying, "Daniel! Daniel!"

"Here, mother, here I am! don't you see me, then?"

My mother turned half round, felt before her with trembling hands, and said in a heart-rending voice,—

"Alas! no, my treasure, I cannot see you; I shall never see you again; I am blind."

At these words I gave a great cry and fell back on the bed.

It was not much wonder that those poor eyes should have been worn out by the tears they had wept during twenty years of suffering over her ruined home, her two

sons dead, her husband far away from her ! but for me, what a terrible blow was this ! what a fearful coincidence with my dream !

After all that had passed, was it not enough to kill me ? But I did not die. I could not die now. What would become of my mother if she was left alone in her blindness ? Where would she find tears to weep for a third child ? What would become of my father (that wandering Jew of vine-culture), who was not allowed time even to come and see his sick child, or put a flower on his dead child's grave ? Who would provide a hearth where in years to come their aged hands might find the genial warmth of a loving home ? No, no, I could not, would not die. I clung to life with all my might. They told me if I would get well I must not think, and I must not cry ; I did not think and I did not cry. I lay in my bed as quiet as a child, playing with the tassels of the down quilt to keep myself from thinking. A canon could not have led an easier life.

Every one came to see me, but on tip-toe. My mother spent her days setting by my bed-side knitting, for her dear hands were so accustomed to the long needles that they went as fast as when she had her eyesight.



Madame Tribu came too, and Pierrotte's radiant face was seen every five minutes peeping in at the door. Even the flute-player would come up to inquire three or four times a day. Truth compels me to say, however, that that was not exactly what brought him up; the lady of great merit was the attraction. When Camille Pierrotte told him formally that she would have nothing to say to him and his flute, the ardent musician fell back on the Widow Tribu, who, though certainly less rich and less pretty than the daughter of the Cévenol, was not quite without charms or provision. The flute man lost no time with the romantic matron, and at the third interview there was already some mention of marriage, and there was now a talk of setting up a druggist's establishment in the Rue Lombard with the savings of the lady. It was to keep these fine projects afloat that the virtuoso was so anxious to know how I was getting on.

And Camille, what of her? had she left the house? No, but from the moment I was out of danger, she hardly ever came into the room. Whenever she did, it was only for a moment, to fetch the blind lady and lead her to the dining-room, but she never said a word to me.

I lay there and sighed as I thought of past times, of the red rose, of my lost happiness. It was clear that I was no longer loved, that I was avoided ; but it was my own fault, I had no right to complain. Yet what an ineffable joy it would have been in the midst of all my sorrows if that love had been mine through all. Well, I thought, the mischief is done, I must not let myself dwell on it. There is no further question of happiness in my life ; what I have before me is to do my duty as Jack did his, to the last hour of his life. I will speak to Pierrotte to-morrow morning.

All the next morning from peep of day I watched behind my curtains till I heard Pierrotte's cautious step stealing along on his way down to the shop, then I called softly, " M. Pierrotte ! M. Pierrotte ! "

He came to my bed-side ; and without looking up, but in great agitation, I said,—

" I am getting well now, my kind friend, and I want to talk seriously to you. I will not try to thank you for all you have done and are doing for my mother and for me."

He interrupted me quickly. " Not a word about that, M. Daniel ; what I do is my duty to do ; it was all settled with M. Jack."

"Yes, yes, I know, Pierrotte, you have always the same answer for whatever is said on that subject. It is not that I am going to speak of. No, I called you to ask a fresh favour of you. Your shopman is going away; would you take me in his place? Please listen to what I want to say; don't refuse me till you have heard me to the end. I know that after all my misconduct I have no right to be here among you all. I know that my presence is painful to—one in the house, and it is only just that she should hate the sight of me. But if I arrange that she should never see me, if I never come upstairs, but am always in the shop, if I belong to your house only as the great dog in the yard belongs to a house without ever coming into it,—would you take me on these conditions?"

Pierrotte looked as if he was going to take my curly head in his great hands and kiss it, but he restrained himself, and said quietly,—

"Upon my word, M. Daniel, before I say anything I must consult my little girl. Your proposal would suit me well enough; but I don't know whether she—but I can find out. She is sure to be dressed. Here, Camille!"





"There, explain yourselves, you two."

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Camille was always up with the lark, and was now in the act of watering her rose-tree in the drawing-room. She entered dressed in a morning-gown, with her hair turned back *à la chinoise*, as fresh and as gay as opening flowers.

"Look here, my girl," said the Cévenol. "Here is M. Daniel proposing to come to me as clerk ; only he thinks that his presence might be too painful to you."

"Painful!" interrupted Camille, changing colour. That was all she said, but her eyes finished the sentence. Yes, the blue eyes shining like the stars, looked at me and said so plainly, "I love you still, I have never been able to leave off loving you," that my poor heart felt a thrill of joy.

"There, explain yourselves, you two. I think there is some misunderstanding between you," said Pierrotte, laughing in his sleeve.

He went over to the window and drummed a Cévennes hornpipe on the pane, then when he thought the young people had sufficiently explained themselves (as if we had had time to say three words!), he came back and looked at them.

"Well?"

"Oh, Pierrotte!" cried I, stretching out my hands to him, "she is as good as you are. She has forgiven me."

From that moment my convalescence proceeded with seven-leagued boots. Well it might! The blue eyes were always beside me. We spent the days making plans for the future. We talked of marriage, of the home to be restored. We talked of Jack too, my "mother Jack," and his name brought hot tears to our eyes. But life had come back to the old house. We felt that. And if any one wonders how so tender a sentiment could spring up in the midst of mourning and tears, let him go to the churchyard and see the lovely flowerets which bloom among the tomb-stones.

But do not imagine that anything henceforward could make me unmindful of my duty. Happy as I was up there with my mother on one side, and the blue eyes on the other, I was longing to get well, that I might get up and go down to the shop. I longed to follow Jack's example in a patient and diligent life. After all, selling plates was better than sweeping out the Ouly Institute, or being hissed at Mont Parnasse.

There was no more talk of the Muse. I should love

poetry all my life, but not my own ; and one day when the printer, tired of keeping the nine hundred and ninety-nine volumes of the Pastoral Comedy, sent them all to the Arcade, the unlucky author had the courage to say, "They must all be burnt." The more prudent Pierrotte replied, "Burnt ! not a bit of it. I had much rather keep them ; I will find a use for them—I may well say—at this very moment I have to pack a consignment of egg-cups for Madagascar. It seems that the niggers out there saw a missionary's wife eating boiled eggs, and won't eat them any other way now. So, with your permission, M. Daniel, the books will just do to wrap up the egg-cups in." A fortnight later the Pastoral Comedy was on the high seas on its way to the country of the illustrious Rana Volo. Let us hope it answered there better than at Paris.

And now, reader, before closing this history, let me introduce you once more to the yellow drawing-room.

It was a Sunday afternoon, a beautiful winter's day, with bright sun and hard frost. The whole house was radiant. I was up for the first time. In honour of the event, we had sacrificed some dozens of oysters to *Æsculapius* at breakfast time, accompanied by a libation



of good white Touraine. We were all together in the drawing-room, there was a roaring fire in the chimney, and the sun was making silvery pictures on the frost-covered panes.

I was sitting near the fire on a low stool at the feet of my blind mother, and conversing in a low tone with Mademoiselle Pierrotte, who was redder than the little rose she wore in her hair, but that was only natural, for she was so close to the fire. Now and then a nibbling sound came from the corner where the old man with a head like a bird was ensconced ; or an exclamation of woe was heard from the lady of great merit who was losing her money—the money destined to fit up the druggist's shop—at *bélique*. Pray observe the triumphant air of Madame Lalouette, who is gaining, and the uneasy smile of the flute-player, who is losing.

And M. Pierrotte ? He was not far off. Seated in the window, and half hidden by the ample jonquil-coloured curtains, he was silently absorbed in something which seemed to be a difficult job. On a stand before him he had compasses, rulers, squares, Indian ink, and a long scroll of drawing-paper, which he was covering with

mysterious figures. His work seemed to please him. Every five minutes he raised his head, put it a little on one side, and smiled complacently at his daubing. What could this mysterious work be?

We were soon to know.

When all was finished to his mind, he came out of his nook, crossed the room softly, crept behind us, and suddenly displayed his long scroll before our eyes, saying,—

“There, my young love-makers, what do you say to that?”

He was answered by exclamations of “Oh, papa!”  
“Oh, M. Pierrotte!”

“What’s the matter? what is it?” asked the poor blind mother, quite startled.

“The matter, mademoiselle?” cried Pierrotte gleefully. “It is—I may well say—it is the design for the new names we are to put over the shop in a few months. Come, M. Daniel, read it out, that we may judge of the effect.”

Perhaps in the inmost recesses of my heart I gave a parting sigh to my “Blue Butterflies,” but I suppressed it with, “Come, be a man, What-d’ye-call’em!” and,

taking the scroll in both hands, I boldly read out with a firm voice this shop sign, where my future fate was inscribed in letters a foot high:—

GLASS AND CHINA.

EYSSETTE AND PIERROTTE,

LATE LALOUETTE.

\* \* \* \* \*

I thought much and often of Jack. If ever I did shrink a little, I said to myself, "Remember Jack; he never shrank from a duty."

At last, with his help—for I knew his spirit, even in heaven, was still watching over me—I succeeded in taking my proper place.

The childish poet, the would-be actor, has become part of that honest commercial world of Paris which is proud of its vocation. His brother Jack, with the true instinct of devoted affection, had foreseen his capabilities; and when he felt his death approaching he had drawn up a paper, which was to be given to Daniel by Pierrotte,

when the address on the cover should have become a reality :—" M. Daniel Eyssette, Manufacturer and Seller of Porcelain." The enclosure was an exceedingly able treatise on art in relation to the manufacture and sale of china, pointing out the various ways in which a skilful man of taste and enterprise might apply art to ceramic productions. This paper was like a ray of light to Daniel Eyssette. A tradesman, then, was not, as he had foolishly imagined, necessarily the opposite of an artist.

He followed the direction pointed out by his brother, with all the eagerness inspired by his natural love of the beautiful. The amazed Pierrotte saw his own name become famous by being coupled with that of Daniel Eyssette, and his rivals were obliged to confess that that sly old Pierrotte had made his fortune when he gave his daughter to that queer little fellow.

The queer little fellow loves his business and is proud of it ; but most of all he loves and is proud of his wife, who is so clever in all she puts her hand to, so perfect as a wife and mother.

And, oh ! how happy he is when he traces in the

features and character of his eldest son the features and character of his beloved brother Jack, and sees repeated in his two little girls the soft, intelligent, loving blue eyes of their mother!



THE END.





